

Early Youth Interventions

An inspection of the contribution the criminal justice agencies in Northern Ireland make to preventing children and young people from entering the criminal justice system

July 2012

Criminal Justice Inspection
Northern Ireland
a better justice system for all





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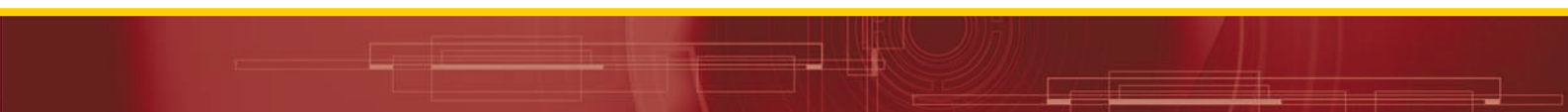
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List of abbreviations

C4EO	Centre for Excellence and Outcomes
CASE	Citizenship and Safety Education Programme
CJI	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFMDFM	The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PBNI	Probation Board for Northern Ireland
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
UK	United Kingdom
UNOCINI	Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland
YJA	Youth Justice Agency



Chief Inspector's Foreword

Early intervention can be described as the policies and programmes which are aimed at tackling the problems emerging for children and young people and their families most at risk. There is clear evidence to show that channelling funds to young children is likely to generate more positive changes than spending money on an older child. Many of the problems that contribute to criminal behaviour are already formed long before the young person reaches the criminal justice system.

A snap-shot study on the backgrounds of young people detained in the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre in November 2011 shows over a third were 'looked-after' or voluntary accommodated children within the care system; 82% were identified as coming from a single parent family and 34% had experienced domestic violence in the home environment. In relation to educational attainment, 38% of the sample had a statement of learning needs whilst 14% had a recognised learning disability; 80% of the sample had issues relating to school exclusion or absconding from school. The vast majority of young people (92%) had misused drugs or alcohol, while 32% had self-harmed.

The profile of young offenders as those coming from dysfunctional families who have become detached from the formal education system, and who have developed chaotic lifestyles abusing drugs and alcohol is depressingly familiar. While the problems are well known, and the benefit of youth interventions are well understood, the practical difficulties of ensuring that this determines the allocation of resources and focus of work across the various Northern Ireland Executive departments are enormous.

Inspectors could not get a complete picture of the number, types and funding of early intervention programmes available in Northern Ireland. They found there was a myriad of providers, target participants, silo funding streams and delivery and evaluation methodologies. In relation to the situation in Northern Ireland generally, and the justice system specifically, there was a lack of co-ordination, a risk of duplication and a lack of evaluation which made it difficult to assess effectiveness and value for money. What is clear is that for many young people it was a case of 'too little too late'. All too often interventions attempt to deal with social problems that are already well entrenched. This is not only ineffective in helping those young people with issues that contribute to criminal behaviour, it is also more expensive. The path to the youth justice system is a well-trodden one, yet we as a society seem incapable of helping some young people to move off it.

Ultimately the question of whether to fully commit to an early interventions approach is one for Ministers. There needs to be consensus and co-operation between those responsible for health and social care, education, criminal justice, social development, employment and learning and the environment. If there is a desire for a move to early interventions then a joined up system of governance, accountability, funding, delivery, evaluation of outcomes and ultimately a shared vision



of success is essential. This report calls for a clear commitment to such an approach. The challenge is immense. The alternative is a continued failure, as a society, for our most vulnerable children.

This inspection was led by Rachel Lindsay and Dr Ian Cameron of CJI. I am also grateful to Shane Gorman, who was on placement with CJI at the time of the inspection, for his assistance with the background research for this inspection. I wish to thank all those involved in the inspection process, particularly those children and young people who spoke to Inspectors and those in the voluntary and community sector who work with them. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) Statistics and Research Branch for preparing background information on young people in custody in the Juvenile Justice Centre to support the inspection.

Michael Maguire

Dr Michael Maguire

Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland
July 2012



Executive Summary

There has been a growing level of support in recent years, both in the United Kingdom (UK) and internationally, for the early intervention approach. The purported benefits of early interventions have been well documented in terms of social, emotional, educational and financial outcomes. Early interventions have been suggested as critical in order to ensure all children are ready for school, ready for work and ready for life (Allen, 2011a¹).

This inspection aimed to examine and assess early youth intervention arrangements across the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. The contribution of criminal justice was viewed as only part of a holistic system with responsibilities also lying with other Executive departments.

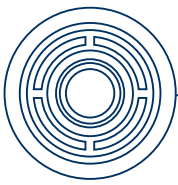
There was no specific strategy in existence in relation to early interventions in Northern Ireland, however, the Children and Young People's 10-year Strategy was the over-riding plan in this area. The responsibility for this sat with the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) with the Junior Ministers chairing the Ministerial Sub-Committee for children and young people's issues. There had been limited co-ordination until 2011 of the work of Executive departments in this area, with the Early Interventions Programme for the Prevention of Offending as one exception. The Junior Ministers were working towards developing a more joined-up approach across Executive departments and were supportive of the early interventions model.

The Health and Social Care Board had been in the process of setting up the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership to address this lack of co-ordination. The Strategic Partnership included representatives from across statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector. It aimed to operate at regional, area and locality level to co-ordinate service provision and evaluation to deliver against the indicators in the 10-year Strategy.

Although it was too early to assess the impact of the Strategic Partnership it demonstrated that there was commitment at Chief Executive level to achieving a more co-ordinated approach to children's services. However there were some concerns raised with the architecture of the Strategic Partnership for example, in relation to the lack of accountability and large membership. In addition, there were already some agencies involved in activities outside of the Partnership that could potentially lead to duplication of effort.

Inspectors could not get a complete picture from interviewees of the number, types and funding of early intervention programmes available in Northern Ireland. There were a myriad of providers, target participants, funding streams and delivery and evaluation methodologies utilised in the projects that Inspectors were aware of. Inspectors were conscious however that there were many more community projects for children and young people receiving statutory funding that they were not made aware of during the inspection. The evaluation report for the Early Intervention for the Prevention of Offending Programme illustrated the potential for duplication. In the Programme almost half of young people had one agency other than the referrer engaged

¹ Allen, G. (2011a). *Early interventions: The next steps, an independent report to Her Majesty's Government*. London: Cabinet Office.



with them, and 28% were engaged with two agencies other than the referrer. This highlights the overlaps between agencies working with children, although it is also a reflection of the complex needs of some of these young people.

The interventions delivered which had an input from criminal justice included the participation of very young children with no justice involvement (for example Roots of Empathy), educational programmes in secondary schools, projects to prevent offending and those specifically targeting young people who had offended or were coming to the attention of police (for example Child Intervention Panels). The exact nature of the criminal justice input varied but included direct referrals, programme delivery, funding and management or oversight.

The level of criminal justice input to these types of interventions was of considerable debate amongst stakeholders. The overriding view was that, whilst agencies should have some input in terms of being able to refer young people or providing funding for projects, the justice sector should engage in a non-direct way in order to avoid stigmatisation or bringing young people into the criminal justice system further. Some stakeholders suggested that a family support model was more appropriate where solutions were based in communities rather than imposed on families by statutory agencies.

There was a limited evaluation of outcomes into early intervention projects, particularly in the long-term. The Early Interventions Programme had indicated some initial successes but differences in evaluation methods made comparisons difficult. In addition long-term follow-up was needed to fully identify the benefits of the projects. The evaluation of outcomes for some projects was being considered by the YJA and in general would form part of the remit of the Strategic Partnership, but this had not yet progressed.

In light of this lack of evaluation it was virtually impossible for Inspectors to assess the effectiveness of early interventions undertaken to date and the impact of the contribution of the criminal justice agencies. Without effective evaluation over the longer-term referrals will continue to be made to projects with no conception of outcomes or success.

Because of the lack of co-ordination there was a risk of duplication of funding for projects and the lack of evaluation made it difficult to assess effectiveness and value for money. On the face of it however, the costs of addressing issues at an early stage through early interventions are far less than the costs of later criminal justice or social care solutions such as custody or secure care. Again, rigorous evaluation is needed to demonstrate the cost-benefit of the early intervention approach in Northern Ireland as it has in other jurisdictions.

During this inspection, Inspectors encountered a number of issues, which are outlined above, in relation to a limited overall strategy for justice agencies, a lack of co-ordination between Executive departments, a cluttered landscape of provision leading to potential duplications and a lack of evaluation of outcomes. Inspectors could have made a number of recommendations aimed at making incremental changes in practice within single agencies which addressed isolated issues. However, these individual recommendations would not address the fundamental issue, which is that the implementation of the early interventions approach requires a change in



direction encompassing all areas of Government policy and practice in relation to children and young people. In light of this need for transformational change, Inspectors were minded to make only one recommendation from which developments in practice should flow. This recommendation is in keeping with the recommendations of the Youth Justice Review Team in September 2011.

The decision to move to an early interventions approach is not an easy one. The ultimate impact may take several years to become apparent and the costs may need to be shifted from other services, leading to a shortfall until the benefits are fully realised. Ultimately the question of whether to fully commit to an early interventions approach is one for Ministers and there needs to be consensus between those responsible for health and social care, education and criminal justice and to some extent also with those responsible for social development, employment and learning and the environment.

If there is a desire to move to the early interventions approach then a joined-up system of governance, accountability, funding, delivery and evaluation of outcomes is essential and this needs commitment at the highest level. Only when there is a shared vision about adopting an early interventions approach will this translate to strategy and policy and ultimately operational procedures.

If this shared vision is agreed at the Executive, Inspectors only make one recommendation: **that there is a clear commitment to the early interventions approach from the Ministerial representatives on the Ministerial Sub-Committee for Children and Young People. In delivering against this commitment we recommend that:**

- **the approach to early interventions is based on an agreed, long-term, strategic framework with an appropriately structured Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership that is fully endorsed by Ministers of all relevant departments;**
- **all decisions around identification of needs, delivery, funding and evaluation of early interventions should be taken by the Strategic Partnership; and**
- **the decisions of the Strategic Partnership should be made within a governance structure which is accountable to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.**





Recommendation

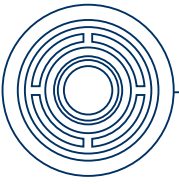
Inspectors recommend that there is a clear commitment to the early interventions approach from the Ministerial representatives on the Ministerial Sub-Committee for Children and Young People. In delivering against this commitment we recommend that:

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- **all decisions around identification of needs, delivery, funding and evaluation of early interventions should be taken by the Strategic Partnership; and**
- **the decisions of the Strategic Partnership should be made within a governance structure which is accountable to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.**

Section



Inspection Report



CHAPTER 1:

Introduction



'I believe that Early Intervention represents the most fundamental investment in the human capital of our country.'
(Graham Allen MP, *Early interventions: Smart investment, massive savings, the second independent report to Her Majesty's Government.*)

- 1.1 In recent years there has been a growing recognition of the value of early interventions and investment in the lives of children and young people as a more effective and preventative approach, which is not only focussed on the rights of the child but provides better value for money and improved outcomes for children, their families and society as a whole. A number of reports in recent years, both external to and commissioned by Government, have pointed to the benefits of early intervention and called for a longer-term strategy in relation to prevention of offending and support for families.
- 1.2 Reports such as those authored by Graham Allen MP in 2011^{2&3} commissioned by the UK Coalition Government have highlighted the need for a new approach to early interventions, and the limited costs of the early intervention approach versus the traditional approach of dealing with issues as they arise. These reports come on the back of a plethora of research and reviews by both Government and non-government organisations (such as The Howard League of Penal Reform, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Ministry of Justice and Action for Children) all pointing to the benefit of early interventions. It is also an issue that the devolved administrations have focussed on. For example, the Northern Ireland Assembly Research and Library Services produced a research paper on Preventative Spending in January 2011 and the work of the Violence Reduction Unit in Glasgow has been used as a national centre of expertise in Scotland since 2006.
- 1.3 The opening statement to the second report of Graham Allen MP³ is co-signed by five prominent authors who had recently published reports in the area of early youth issues and interventions. The statement reads *'We have all recently conducted reviews for Her Majesty's Government in this field and while we agree on so much, we would like to particularly underline that all five of us strongly support this Report's emphasis on the cost-effectiveness of early intervention.'*

² Allen, G. (2011a). *Early interventions: The next steps, an independent report to Her Majesty's Government*. London: Cabinet Office.

³ Allen, G. (2011b). *Early interventions: Smart investment, massive savings, the second independent report to Her Majesty's Government*. London: Cabinet Office.



We feel it is vital that the government now begins the groundwork to enable our late reaction culture to be transcended by an early intervention one. Our collective view is that the moment for a serious, sustained programme of early intervention, which is promoted inside and outside government, has arrived.'

What is early intervention?

1.4 In his first report⁴ Graham Allen MP defines early intervention as referring to *'the general approaches, and the specific policies and programmes, which help to give children aged 0-3 the social and emotional bedrock they need to reach their full potential; and to those which help older children become the good parents of tomorrow'*. He also provides a useful breakdown of the three main areas. He refers to three broad types of early interventions; firstly to help children to be ready for school (for primary school; the foundation years of 0-5), secondly to be ready for work (as they leave secondary school or university) and thirdly to be ready for life (to become loving and nurturing parents themselves).

1.5 A practice guide on early interventions published by the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO)⁵ provides the following definition *'intervening early and as soon as possible to tackle problems emerging for children, young people and their families or with a population most at risk of developing problems. Early intervention may occur at any point in a child or young person's life'*. This highlights the fact that early intervention does not just relate to children of pre-school or primary school age, but that it

can span the whole age range from birth (or in some circumstances pre-birth) to adulthood.

1.6 Practical examples of early interventions vary widely in terms of the ages of the child or young person targeted, the aims of the programme and whether it is a universal or needs-based programme. Examples therefore include:


- pre-natal programmes working with low-income, at-risk first-time mothers (e.g. the Nurse Family Partnership);
- programmes to strengthen parental competencies for pre-schoolers (e.g. Incredible Years);
- programmes designed to support social and emotional development in primary school children (e.g. Roots of Empathy, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies);
- education programmes to support educational improvement (e.g. Early Literacy and Learning Model);
- family-based interventions to enhance protective factors and reduce risk of offending behaviour (e.g. Functional Family Therapy, 'Triple P' Positive Parenting Programme); and
- programmes to target older children with particular behaviours that need addressing such as alcohol or drug-taking issues (e.g. Life Skills Training).

1.7 The second interim report of the Munro Review of Child Protection⁶ discussed the need for universal services for all children and for early interventions and specialist services for some. Munro states that *"early identification and provision of help is in the child's best interests and multiagency services which deliver support for families are vital in*

4 Allen, G. (2011a). *Early interventions: The next steps, an independent report to Her Majesty's Government*. London: Cabinet Office.

5 Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) (2010). *Grasping the nettle: early intervention for children, families and communities*. London: C4EO.

6 Munro, E. (2011). *The Munro Review of Child Protection: Interim Report 2: The Child's Journey*. London: Department for Education.



promoting children's well being.” The Review endorsed efforts made to improve family support services in the community such as Sure Start Children's Centres and the health visitor service. In addition the review referenced the announcement by the Secretary of State for Health in England in October 2010 that he would double the number of places on the Family Nurse Partnership by 2015. It also highlighted the important role of supervised volunteers in early support, for example in Home Start programmes.

The current situation in the UK with regard to early interventions

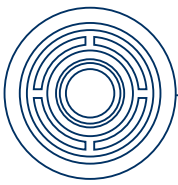
- 1.8 *Graham Allen MP's first report⁴ stated that 'In spite of its merits, which have achieved increasing recognition by national and local government and the voluntary sector, the provision of successful evidence-based early intervention programmes remains persistently patchy and dogged by institutional and financial obstacles. In consequence, there remains an overwhelming bias in favour of existing policies of late intervention at a time when social problems are well-entrenched - even though these policies are known to be expensive and of limited success.'* He calls for a redressing of the imbalance between spending on early intervention compared to later interventions.
- 1.9 *Allen also highlights that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has recently reported that 'country spending profiles examined are not consistent with the theory and evidence on child well-being. In contrast there is little or no obvious rationale for why so many*

governments place the weight of their spending on late childhood'. The report continues: 'The OECD goes on to argue that spending on young children is more likely to generate more positive changes than spending on older ones and, indeed, is likely to be fairer to more disadvantaged children. But it notes that, in the UK, for every £100 spent on early childhood (0–5 years), £135 is spent on middle childhood (6–11 years) and £148 is spent on late childhood (12–17 years).'

- 1.10 *A consultation response by The Howard League of Penal Reform (2011)⁷ provides evidence in the criminal justice context to support this, stating that in England and Wales less than 7% of the Youth Justice Board's budget is spent on prevention and over 61% is spent on custody.*
- 1.11 *In Northern Ireland specific legislation provides the statutory basis for undertaking such early interventions in order to prevent offending. Section 53 of the Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 2002 places a statutory duty on the YJA to protect the public by preventing crime by young people. It states 'The principal aim of the youth justice system is to protect the public by preventing offending by children.'* Additionally, under The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 Schedule 2 paragraph 8, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable steps to stop children getting involved in crime, specifically 'to encourage children within the authority's area not to commit criminal offences'.
- 1.12 *Graham Allen's latest report⁸*

⁷ The Howard League for Penal Reform. (2011). *Response to Breaking the Cycle: Effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders*. London: The Howard League for Penal Reform.

⁸ Allen, G. (2011b). *Early interventions: Smart investment, massive savings, the second independent report to Her Majesty's Government*. London: Cabinet Office.



recommends the setting up of an Early Intervention Foundation, independent of Government. He suggests its five initial functions might be as follows:

- A centre to champion and promote early intervention.
- Improving the evidence base so that investment is targeted on what works.
- Increasing awareness of social investment opportunities in early intervention.
- Improving fidelity and developing early intervention programmes.
- Acting as a source of advice on social investment for early intervention.

In March 2012 the UK Minister of State for Children and Families confirmed the Government's intention to procure the Early Intervention Foundation.⁹ It has secured £3.5 million to fund it for two years. After this it will become self financing.

Why early interventions have an impact

1.13 A research paper for the Northern Ireland Assembly¹⁰ outlines evidence which suggests that the most effective preventative spending is that targeted at the 0-3 early years age group. This is because 95% of a child's brain development occurs during these years and they are deemed crucial for ensuring that children are properly prepared to start formal education.

1.14 The C4EO practice guide cites research which shows that up to 10% of children have a long-term, persistent communication disability, and approximately 50% in socially

disadvantaged areas have significant language delay on entry to school. It indicates a strong correlation between communication difficulties and low attainment, mental health issues, poor employment or training prospects and youth crime. The guide goes on to say that *'with the right support, however, many children with language delay go on to catch up with their peers, and those with a pre-school history of persistent disorders that can be resolved by the age of 5½, go on to perform within normal limits'*. The impact of parental influence is also considered to be significant, especially for those with low levels of literacy and numeracy and confidence, who may require additional support to build on their strengths and develop their skills.

The economic case for investment in early interventions

1.15 Traditionally the impact of early interventions has been difficult to evidence. However, it should be noted that the impact of other criminal justice solutions have also been hard to evidence, for example, in relation to re-offending rates after a period in custody. A Ministry of Justice report¹¹ regarding youth justice in England and Wales states that traditionally, the evidence base for prevention work has been less good than work with offenders. In 2010 a joint inspection of youth crime in England and Wales was undertaken which looked at policing, probation and healthcare¹². The inspection found that the significant prevention work taking place had as its outcome goal, a reduction in youth offending or at least a reduction in the likelihood of offending.

⁹ See www.parliament.uk

¹⁰ Northern Ireland Assembly, Research and Library Service. (2011). *Preventative spending*. Research paper NIAR 19-11. Belfast: Northern Ireland Assembly.

¹¹ Ministry of Justice (2010). *The Youth Justice System in England and Wales: Reducing Offending by Young People*. London: The Stationery Office.

¹² HMI Constabulary, HMI Probation, Care Quality Commission & Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (2010). *A Joint inspection of Youth Crime Prevention: A Joint Inspection by the HMI Constabulary, HMI Probation, Care Quality Commission and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales*. London: HMIC.



However overall, the report stated that the inspection found these outcome goals difficult, if not impossible to assess.

1.16 Some authors have however, tried to quantify the cost of investment in early intervention compared to the cost of interventions at a later stage, although estimates vary. The research report for the Northern Ireland Assembly¹³ cites studies which indicate that for every £1 spent on early years education, £7 must be spent to have the same impact in adolescence. James Heckman, the economist, estimates that the economic equation is greater; at a ratio of 11:1; therefore for every £1 we spend in early years, before age three, there will be a need to spend £11 later to get the same result¹⁴. Other economists support this view, and some even estimate the ratio as high as 17:1.

1.17 Allen¹⁵ also cites a number of research analyses which have indicated the returns for investment in early interventions. One example provided is of an evaluation by the RAND Corporation¹⁶ of the Nurse Family Partnership (a programme targeted to support 'at-risk' families by supporting parental behaviour to foster emotional attunement and confident, non-violent parenting). This estimated that the programme provided savings for high-risk families by the time children were aged 15. These savings, which were

stated to be over five times greater than the cost of the programme, came in the form of reduced welfare and criminal justice expenditures, higher tax revenues and improved physical and mental health. It is important to note however, that in Allen's second report¹⁷ he also highlights the importance of developing early intervention programmes delivered outside the UK to a UK context which reflect any different social and cultural norms. This would apply to any development of programmes in Northern Ireland.

The costs of inaction

1.18 There have been various attempts to quantify the total costs of inaction in this area. For example, Action for Children and the New Economics Foundation¹⁸ have estimated that without their proposed addition to early investment, the economy could miss out on returns of £486 billion in the UK over 20 years. This corresponds to £24 billion a year which is equivalent to around one-fifth of projected health spending for 2010–11. Costs involved in inaction are summarised as:

- cost of children in care;
- additional costs of educational support to those with conduct disorder, special educational needs or behavioural problems in school;
- costs associated with drug and alcohol misuse;
- costs associated with mental health

13 Northern Ireland Assembly, Research and Library Service. (2011). *Preventative spending*. Research paper NIAR 19-11. Belfast: Northern Ireland Assembly.

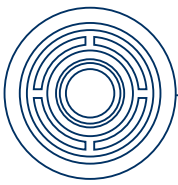
14 As cited by Detective Chief Superintendent John Carnochan, Scottish Violence Reduction Unit at the Children 1st Annual Lecture *Breaking the cycle of violence* on Wednesday 10th December 2008 in Glasgow.

15 Allen, G. (2011a). *Early interventions: The next steps, an independent report to Her Majesty's Government*. London: Cabinet Office.

16 Karoly L.A., Kilburn M.R. & Cannon J.S. (2005). *Early Childhood Interventions: Proven Results, Future Promise*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation as cited in Allen, G. (2011b).

17 Allen, G. (2011b). *Early interventions: Smart investment, massive savings, the second independent report to Her Majesty's Government*. London: Cabinet Office.

18 Action for Children & New Economics Foundation (2009). *Backing the Future: Why Investing in Children is Good for Us All*. London: New Economics Foundation.



problems;

- productivity lost to the state as a result of youth unemployment; and
- cost of youth crime.

1.19 The Howard League of Penal Reform (2011)¹⁹ state *'The evidence shows that children that end up in the justice system come, in the main, from the most disadvantaged families and communities, whose lives are frequently characterised by social deprivation and abuse'*. The report also suggests that children who are exposed to *'the most acute combination of risk factors'* are up to 20 times more likely to offend than those who are not, which reinforces the need to provide particularly to those children in vulnerable situations.

1.20 The Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile published in December 2011²⁰ indicates similar findings. The report highlights that in England and Wales:

- 71% of children in custody have been involved with, or in the care of, social services before entering custody;
- 76% of children in custody have an absent father and 33% an absent mother;
- 86% of boys and 82% of girls surveyed said they had at some time been excluded from school;
- 25% of children in the Youth Justice System have identified special educational needs, 46% are rated as under-achieving at school and 29% have difficulties with literacy and numeracy; and
- 75% of all prisoners have a dual diagnosis (mental health problems combined with alcohol or drug misuse).

In relation to prisoners interviewed for the *Surveying Prisoner Crime Reduction*²¹ study:

- 29% reported having observed violence in the home and 29% reported experiencing emotional, sexual or physical abuse as a child;
- 37% said that someone in their family (other than themselves) had been found guilty of a non-motoring criminal offence;
- 42% had been expelled or permanently excluded from school; and
- 71% reported using drugs in the year before custody (64% in the four weeks prior to custody) and 22% drank alcohol every day in the four weeks before custody.


1.21 A report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons in 2011 provided similar findings. This reported on their annual survey of the children and young people (aged 15 to 18) who were held in prison custody in England and Wales. They analysed 1,092 responses (responses from 1,052 young men and 40 young women) collected between 1 April 2010 and 31 March 2011. The demographic details of the young people indicated that:

- over one quarter of young men (27%) and over half of young women (55%) said they had spent some time in local authority care;
- 13% of young men and almost a quarter of young women (24%) reported having children;
- 86% of young men and 82% of young women said they had been excluded

19 The Howard League for Penal Reform. (2011). *Response to Breaking the Cycle: Effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders*. London: The Howard League for Penal Reform.

20 Prison Reform Trust. (2011). *Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile: December 2011*. London: Prison Reform Trust.

21 Ministry of Justice. (2010). *Compendium of reoffending statistics and analysis*. As cited in Prison Reform Trust. (2010). *Bromley Briefings Prison Factfile: December 2010*. London: Prison Reform Trust.



from school. 42% of young men and 55% of young women said they were 14 years or younger when they last attended school. 69% of young men and three-quarters of young women said that they had truanted from school; and

- across the male estate, the Keppel Unit, a specialist unit for vulnerable young men, had the highest proportions of young men who reported being from a Gypsy, Romany or Traveller background (13%), considered themselves to have a disability (38%), had spent time in local authority care (41%), and were 14 years or younger when they were last at school (71%).

1.22 In order to get an indication of the profile of young people in custody in Northern Ireland, the Statistics and Research Branch of the YJA carried out a specific piece of research for CJI. Population snapshots for young people in the Juvenile Justice Centre for 1 April and 1 September 2011 were selected for the analysis. In total this yielded a sample of 50 young people, 38 who were on remand, and 12 on sentence. Information was collected from a manual trawl of the YJA assessment records for each young person. The information presented therefore, relies primarily on the detail of completion and accuracy of the YJA assessment. The results of this research are included in Table 1. The findings are very similar to those seen in England and Wales, and highlight the level of need of young people who enter the custodial system.

The criminal justice context

1.23 A key recommendation in The Howard League report was that for England and Wales ‘*the most important change should be one of values: children are children first and offenders second. Addressing the underlying reasons why children commit crime should be the priority, rather than how to punish them when these needs have not been addressed*’. Some commentators would be of the view that a child who ends up in the formal criminal justice system represents a failure of society to intervene sufficiently early and support that child to develop to their full potential. When it is taken into consideration that custody has not been shown to be an effective solution in preventing reoffending (74% of young people released from custody in 2008 in England and Wales reoffended within one year²²) there is a clear need for interventions to prevent young people entering into custodial settings.

The costs of youth crime

1.24 A report regarding youth justice in England and Wales published by the Ministry of Justice in 2010²³ highlighted that offending by young people caused significant costs to society. These costs relate to the offence, the victims and the offender. Although they make up only 11% of the population above the age of criminal responsibility, in 2009 people in this age group were responsible for 17% of all proven offending in England and Wales. The report stated that theft and violent offences are those most commonly committed by young offenders, accounting for over 40% of proven offences in 2009-10. Crime is costly, assuming that young people are

22 Ministry of Justice. (2010). *Reoffending of juveniles: Results from the 2008 cohort*. London: The Stationery Office.

23 Ministry of Justice. (2010). *The Youth Justice System in England and Wales: Reducing Offending by Young People*. London: The Stationery Office.



Table 1: A snapshot-based study on the backgrounds of young people detained in the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre

(Prepared by the YJA Statistics & Research Branch November 2011)

First entry to the criminal justice system

- In 43 cases information on age of first warning was available. 42% of these had received a first warning by the age of 13.

Age at first admission to the Juvenile Justice Centre

- 70% of the sample were aged 15 or over on date of first admission to the Juvenile Justice Centre. 20% were aged 14 and the remaining 10% were between 11 and 13.
- 84% of the sample had previous contact with the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) or the YJA prior to their first admission to the Juvenile Justice Centre.

Social Services involvement

- 34% of the sample were looked-after or voluntary accommodated within the care system. A further 22% were known to social services.
- 17% had at some stage, been on the child protection register.

Living arrangements

- For many of the young people, living arrangements were constantly changing. Only 10% of the sample were living at home with both birth parents. At least 82% of cases were identified as being part of a single parent family, either through separation or death of a parent. At least 12% had little or no contact with their biological father.
- 34% had experienced domestic violence within their home environment.

Sibling/parent offending

- This information was not known for two cases. Of the remainder, 17 (35%) had siblings or parents with an offending history.
- For 48 of the cases information was available in relation to the young persons' peer group. 44 of these (92%) were reported to have a peer group who were involved in anti-social behaviour or to be known to the criminal justice system.

Education

- Of the 47 cases with a recorded IQ, scores ranged from 84 to 118. The modal score was 106. Of the sample, 57% had an IQ of 100 or above.
- 38% of the sample had a statement of educational needs, whilst 14% had a recognised (or in one case, suspected) learning disability.



- In 49 cases information was available relating to school attendance. Of these, only 20% were in regular mainstream attendance. The remaining 80% all had issues relating to school exclusion (suspension and expulsion) or absconding from school. A range of alternatives to mainstream school was evidenced for these young people, including Alternative Education Provision, home tuition, education other than at school and special school.

Substance misuse

- 92% of the sample had misused or were misusing alcohol or drugs. Alcohol misuse was evident in varying degrees in virtually all of these cases, with cannabis, and 'blues' (diazepam) also commonly misused.
- In 16% of the cases, one or both parents were misusing alcohol or drugs.

Mental Health

- Almost all of the sample have experienced some form of trauma in their lives. Common examples include:
 - suicide of family member(s) or friend(s);
 - history of sexual, physical or emotional abuse;
 - parental substance misuse;
 - parental mental health difficulties;
 - victim of bullying at school and/or in the community; and
 - victim of paramilitary threats.
- 23% of the sample were diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and a further 4% were suspected to have the disorder. Other mental health issues were also evident to a lesser extent in the sample including depression, conduct disorder, and Oppositional Defiance Disorder.
- 32% of the sample had self-harmed.

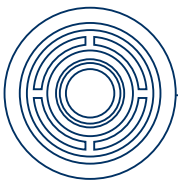
responsible for 17% of all crime; the report estimates that youth crime in 2009 may have been as much as £8.5-£11 billion.

1.25 The report also stated that overall the youth justice system in England and Wales cost some £800 million in 2009-10. Of this, £306 million (38%) was spent on custodial places for young

offenders. In Northern Ireland custodial places for children and young people costs between £132,904 and £267,991 per occupant per year²⁴. In addition the cost of maintaining a child in a residential care home (albeit that this may not be in relation to behaviour that is in conflict with the law) for a year is on average £156,967²⁵. It can be seen therefore that dealing with the issue of

24 Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (2011). *An announced inspection of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre*. Belfast: CJI.

25 Independent Research Solutions (2011). *Evaluation of the Early Intervention Programme for the Prevention of Offending 2008-2011*. Belfast: Health and Social Care Board.



youth justice has significant cost implications.

The risk factor approach

1.26 Professor David Farrington, a leading academic in criminology, argues that there is a need to *'identify the key risk factors for offending and implement prevention methods designed to counteract them'*²⁶. Farrington suggests that such an approach can be used not only to identify variables to be targeted, but also to identify persons to be targeted in an intervention programme. However, there are others that disagree with the risk factor model and suggest that it is *'much more suited to generalisations about groups rather than predictions about individuals'* (Armstrong, 2006)²⁷. A report for the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies²⁸ goes as far as to suggest that *'risk-based approaches to children and young people are overly reliant on a misreading of the research base that itself is limited to a relatively narrow set of questions.'*

1.27 The 2010 joint inspection of youth crime in England and Wales²⁹ proposed that risk and protective factors can be grouped under four broad domains:

- the family;
- school and work;
- lifestyle, neighbourhood and community; and
- self, personal and individual practices.

However, the joint inspection report also notes that just because a child presents several of these risk factors

does not mean that future offending is unavoidable. Whether or not the risk factor approach is the right one, it is usual that one or more of these domains are targeted in early intervention programmes. Many would argue that a holistic approach should be taken (i.e. including the family in the intervention), rather than dealing with the child or young person in isolation.

Barriers to the early intervention approach

1.28 There have been several key barriers highlighted to date in obtaining full support for, and transition to, the early intervention. These include the difficulty in demonstrating effective outcomes for the early intervention approach, the short-term nature of Government strategy and subsequent funding for programmes and the silo mentality of different Government departments, who all have responsibility for early intervention. Graham Allen MP, in his first report on early interventions³⁰ described the need for strong leadership from all political parties to overcome the bias towards reactive activity and to achieve a cultural shift to early intervention.

1.29 Allen also points out that *'the general absence of robust evaluation and comparative data has greatly handicapped the progress of evidence-based early intervention in the UK. Without robust information with which to make comparisons, budget holders and potential investors face the problems of equivalence*

26 Farrington, D. (2000). Childhood risk factors and risk-focused prevention. In Maguire, M., Morgan, R. & Reiner, R. (Eds). *The Oxford Handbook of Criminology* (3rd ed.) (pp. 602-640). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

27 Armstrong, D. (2006). Becoming criminal: the cultural politics of risk. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 10 (2).

28 Garside, R. (2009). *Risky people or risky societies? Rethinking interventions for young adults in transition*. London: Centre for Crime and Justice Studies.

29 HMI Constabulary, HMI Probation, Care Quality Commission & Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (2010). *A Joint inspection of Youth Crime Prevention: A Joint Inspection by the HMI Constabulary, HMI Probation, Care Quality Commission and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales*. London: HMIC.

30 Allen, G. (2011a). *Early interventions: The next steps, an independent report to Her Majesty's Government*. London: Cabinet Office.



and accountability for outcomes'. He stated there was a need for authoritative evidence about which forms of early intervention are most successful, and their impact.

1.30 The youth crime joint inspection identified that most of the funding for youth crime prevention projects was of a short-term nature. Inspectors stated that the challenge for strategic managers was to ensure resources were mainstreamed into long-term budget streams; with some areas being more successful than others in achieving this. The approaches adopted required significant partnership agreement and commitment between the major partners, such as children's services and the police. The report recommended that the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office should ensure that they work jointly to re-profile the funding for youth crime prevention work to enable a long-term planning approach to be taken.

1.31 A national evaluation was conducted in 2004 of the Youth Justice Board's crime prevention projects in England and Wales³¹. It found that funding periods in the main, tend not to be longer than three years. Increasing the length of the funding period would allow projects to develop fully, and for a more detailed evaluation of the programmes to be undertaken, which has not generally been possible for these programmes.

1.32 Allen also comments that '*a major additional complication is that successful early intervention programmes bring savings*

to many different agencies. Without pooled budgets, and agreement from those that save from early intervention that they will pay some of the cost, it becomes very difficult to win the economic case in some circles.'

1.33 The Youth Justice Board evaluation report highlighted the need for the effective development of a programme to be set within an agreed multi-agency network. It stated that this needed to be established from the onset with each contributing to the nature and structure of the programmes developed.

The CJI inspection

1.34 This inspection follows on from a previous inspection by CJI of Youth Diversion in Northern Ireland, the report of which was published in July 2011³². That inspection focussed on the diversion of children and young people from the formal criminal justice system, for example, by way of caution or informed warning. In addition however, the report commented upon the support and interventions given to these children and young people in order to prevent further offending. There are obvious overlaps therefore with the topic of this report as many of the issues are similar. The focus of this report however, was more specifically on activities for the **prevention** of offending rather than on preventing re-offending or as an outcome of offending.

1.35 From the outset Inspectors were cognisant that early interventions are not an issue that is dealt with in isolation by the criminal justice system.

31 Powell, H. (2004). *The national evaluation of the Youth Justice Board's crime prevention projects*. London: Youth Justice Board.

32 Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (2011). *Youth Diversion: A thematic inspection of youth diversion in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: CJI.



In fact, as is outlined later in the report, there are differing views as to the extent to which, if at all, justice organisations should be involved in the early interventions field. CJI therefore considered the input of the criminal justice system as one discrete element in this area in the context of a broad multi-disciplinary field which included health and social care, education, voluntary and community organisations and bodies involved in social development. Inevitably during the inspection however, early interventions were viewed as a holistic term for a range of activities which supported children and young people and their families, not just activities which were labelled as ‘preventing offending’.

interviews with representatives of the criminal justice agencies, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), YJA, the Northern Ireland Prison Service (NIPS), and the PBNI, stakeholders from other statutory agencies, the voluntary and community sector and children’s rights organisations, organisations who delivered early intervention or youth programmes and with focus groups of young people. Details of the full inspection methodology can be found at Appendix 1. The Terms of Reference for this inspection can be found at Appendix 2.

- 1.36 Inspectors were also mindful that the role of criminal justice in this area is, rightly so, less than that of other bodies whose primary role is working with children and young people. However, it is inevitable that, in some cases, a lack of early intervention and support for children and young people and their families will lead to conflict with the law and therefore criminal justice agencies have a responsibility to contribute in this area.
- 1.37 The inspection aimed to examine and assess early youth intervention arrangements across the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. The inspection specifically aimed to consider the areas of Strategy and Governance, Delivery, and Outcomes (or projected outcomes). How early youth interventions in Northern Ireland align with existing good practice and relevant standards, where appropriate, was also considered. The inspection methodology included desktop research,

CHAPTER 2:

Strategy and Governance



Early interventions strategy

2.1 There was no specific strategy regarding early interventions in place at the time of the inspection. However the overarching plan in this area in Northern Ireland was the Children and Young People's 10-year Strategy produced in 2006 by OFMDFM. The strategy aimed to *'ensure that by 2016 all our children and young people are fulfilling their potential'*.

2.2 The strategy detailed the outcome measures which would indicate the success of work in this area and drivers for change to realise the aims. The indicators outlined targets which would evidence whether children and young people were:

- healthy;
- enjoying, learning and achieving;
- living in safety and with stability;
- experiencing economic and environmental well-being;
- contributing positively to community and society; and
- living in a society which respects their rights.

A key element of the strategy was the gradual shift to intervention with a pledge that *'we will promote a move to preventative and early intervention practice*

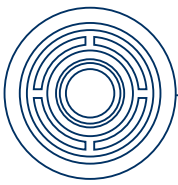
without taking attention away from our children and young people currently most in need of more targeted services'.

2.3 The criminal justice element of the strategy was mainly contained in the area of contributing positively to community and society. Of the four indicators relating to the criminal justice agencies, two focused primarily on measures relating to the formal criminal justice system and two related to the need to prevent offending (number of young people sentenced to custody; number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time). Reference was also made to the PSNI Youth Diversion Scheme in the drivers for change which focuses on the preventative model. There was, however, no mention of the need for early interventions explicitly in this section.

Community safety strategy

2.4 In January 2011 the Department of Justice published a consultation paper as part of the development of a new community safety strategy³³. This included within it a section on early interventions for long-term crime reduction. This noted the benefits of early preventative intervention at both

³³ Department of Justice Northern Ireland (2011). *Building safer, shared and confident communities: A consultation on a new community safety strategy for Northern Ireland*. Belfast: DOJNI.



'early age' and 'early stage'. It notes *'the justice system has a limited role in providing early years interventions, and it is rarely appropriate for the justice agencies to engage at such an early age. However, we recognise the wider societal benefits of early years support and the link between intervention and reducing the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour'*. The introduction of Child Intervention Panels (see Chapter 3) is highlighted as forming part of the early stage interventions.

- 2.5 The consultation paper also commits the Department of Justice to *'work with other Executive Departments to consider how we can support early intervention and promote it at local partnership level where appropriate. We will continue to support and develop early stage intervention projects, and review what works in early stage provision.'* At the time of the inspection the consultation period had concluded but the final strategy was yet to be launched.
- 2.6 A summary of responses to the consultation was published in July 2011. Overall the majority of respondents were supportive of the early intervention approach to tackle the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour. The summary noted that many respondents suggested that the Department's role was to work in partnership with other agencies, both at a strategic level, and locally through local partnerships. It was recommended by respondents that the Department resource early intervention programmes and conduct a scoping exercise into existing provision. It was also recommended that the Department of Justice integrate the Community Safety Strategy with the work of the newly formed Children and

Young People's Strategic Partnership (see below). Some consultees from the voluntary and community sector highlighted the importance of the Department's role being clearly defined as a supporting one for other agencies, so that intervention does not lead to labelling of children or unnecessary contact with the justice system.

Governance and oversight for children's services

- 2.7 At the time of the publication of the Children and Young People's 10-year Strategy the responsible Minister was the then Minister for Children and Young People, Maria Eagle MP. The Minister was responsible for driving forward the strategy with assistance from the Ministerial Sub-Committee for Children and Young People. Since devolution in 2007 the responsibility for Children and Young People had come under the remit of the Junior Ministers in OFMDFM. The Junior Ministers chaired the Ministerial Sub-Committee and all departmental Ministers were members.
- 2.8 Inspectors were informed by stakeholders and agency representatives that the Ministerial Sub-Committee was not well attended by Ministers, with more junior departmental representatives attending in the Ministers place. Views were mixed as to whether a single specific Minister for Children and Young People would be helpful in this regard.
- 2.9 Prior to 2011 there had been limited co-ordination of Executive departments in the area of early interventions. The funding, delivery, oversight and governance of early interventions from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety was



undertaken via the Children's Services Planning process. The Children's Service's Planning process was previously the responsibility of four Health and Social Services Boards, which were amalgamated into one Health and Social Care Board for Northern Ireland as a whole in 2009³⁴. The Department of Education funded its own intervention type work, predominantly in the area of Alternative Education Provision. Resourcing of early intervention for the prevention of offending from the Department of Justice and the Northern Ireland Office previously had been via a specific fund for the purpose, which in latter years had been given to the YJA as a ring-fenced part of their budget (see Chapter 3).

- 2.10 This historic approach to early intervention by the Executive departments in Northern Ireland was considered by agency representatives and stakeholders to be ineffective and very much silo thinking. It was suggested by several interviewees that once a young person became involved in the criminal justice system there had been a tendency for the other departments to step back and leave the criminal justice agencies to deal with the situation. This was especially felt to be the case when the issues raised were potentially difficult ones such as groups of young people becoming seriously disengaged from their communities.
- 2.11 One attempt to achieve a more joined-up approach between health and social care and criminal justice had been

commenced in 2008 under the guise of the Early Intervention for the Prevention of Offending Programme. Through this, funding for three years was made available from the Department of Justice to the Health and Social Care Board to support early intervention projects in the five Health and Social Care Trusts (two delivered by NIACRO, two by Extern and one by Action for Children). The projects were overseen by the Health and Social Care Board, but an Assistant Director from the YJA sat on the Steering Group, and the Early Interventions Manager at the YJA provided practical support and co-ordination for the projects. This provides a useful model of partnership working where justice is seen to provide support in terms of funding and through a steering group but is not directly involved in the programmes. The delivery and outcomes of these programmes is discussed later in this report.

- 2.12 At the time of the inspection the Health and Social Care Board were in the process of developing a new cross-departmental approach to children and young people's services. This involved the formation of a Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and the development of The Children and Young People's Plan. The draft Plan was launched for public consultation on 16 August 2011. Meetings of the Strategic Partnership had recently commenced during the inspection and membership comprised of senior members from all statutory agencies concerned with

34 Prior to the reorganisation of Health and Social Care under the Review of Public Administration, the process of integrated planning for children and young people, known as Children's Services Planning, had been a statutory responsibility of the four Health and Social Services Boards. This statutory duty was transferred to the Health and Social Care Board in 2009, which, together with the Public Health Agency, commissions and plans health and social care services across Northern Ireland. Children's Services Planning was designed originally to be used by Health and Social Care Trusts to address the needs of vulnerable groups of children and young people.



children and young people's lives, as well as senior representation from the voluntary and community sectors.

2.13 From the criminal justice agencies there were representatives of the PSNI, the YJA and the PBNi. The other members ranged from health and social services disciplines, education and library boards, local councils, housing, social security, children's organisations from voluntary and community organisations, and representatives from the black and minority ethnic sector. The partnership therefore had up to 33 members, which would appear challenging to effectively manage and facilitate. A number of stakeholders commented that while the Strategic Partnership was in its infancy, they could foresee the size of the group being problematic.

2.14 Prior to the development of the Strategic Partnership there had been very limited region-wide oversight of early interventions. There appeared to Inspectors therefore, to be a cluttered landscape of provision with a myriad of providers, commissioners, referrers and target participants leading to potentially inconsistent, non-integrated and expensive delivery of services. A greater focus on a collaborative and joined-up approach was needed to address this.

2.15 The aim was that the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership would set the strategic direction and draw up The Children and Young People's Plan. The Plan would then set in place integrated planning and commissioning of support and services to improve outcomes for children and young people. It was envisaged that the Partnership would oversee a planning process which would take place at a

number of levels; firstly the Northern Ireland wide level, secondly planning at the level of geography of Health and Social Care Trusts (outcome groups), and thirdly at locality level (locality groups) – geographies which make sense to local communities (for example a large town or Council area). Finally regional sub-groups were in the process of being established, to take forward those parts of the integrated planning which are required on a Northern Ireland wide-basis. These groups would address:

- Northern Ireland work on a strategic approach to early intervention family support services; and
- the rights and needs of specific vulnerable groups of children and young people (themed groups).

2.16 The draft Northern Ireland Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 was due for launch in November 2011 and a draft had been published for consultation in August 2011. The draft Plan provided an overview of the Partnership and the proposed structure for Children's Services Planning. The four strategic themes which were included in the Plan for the Strategic Partnership were in relation to early intervention, advising Government, integration of planning and optimisation of resources. Within the theme of early intervention it was proposed that the Strategic Partnership seek status for Northern Ireland as an early intervention region. Under advising Government it proposed *'suggesting to Government that all Government departments develop a single approach to children and young people'*.

2.17 Prior to the introduction of the Partnership decisions about early intervention services were made



through the Children's Services Planning process. This had therefore meant that large, regional or national and small, local providers could have an equal chance of applying for funding for a project in a community or small area. Benefits were highlighted in this flexible approach, which combined the scale and regional or national experience of large providers with the ability of small groups to meet the needs of very localised communities. Some stakeholders raised concerns that the regionalisation of this process could lead to a drive for economies of scale, which may mean that the smaller organisations could lose out.

2.18 The outcomes to be measured were those referred to above taken from the 10-year Children and Young Person's Strategy. The Plan aimed to take each of the outcomes and link them to indicators and to actions that needed to be taken to ensure improvements in these outcomes. The development of indicators was being undertaken by the Health and Social Care Board and was well underway at the time of the inspection.

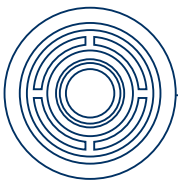
2.19 There were similarities between the development of outcomes and indicators under the Strategy and the approach in England and Wales under the Children's Plan 2020 Goals. The goals fit with the outcomes of the Every Child Matters initiative (be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well-being) and their corresponding aims (for example ready for school, physically healthy etc). The model in England and Wales was based on the premise of every local authority

working with statutory and voluntary partners, through children's trust partnerships, to find out what works best for children and young people in its area and acting on it. This is also underpinned by the Common Assessment Framework which is a standardised approach to conducting assessments of children's additional needs and deciding how these should be met, similar to the Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland (UNOCINI) assessment framework in Northern Ireland³⁵.

2.20 It was too early to assess the impact of the implementation of this new process for Northern Ireland. The Strategic Partnership and the Plan appeared to Inspectors to be a positive development in attempting to co-ordinate and integrate work in relation to children and young people and their families, which was spread across a large number of Executive departments and also included non-statutory bodies. The concern for Inspectors, as also highlighted by representatives of the statutory organisations, was the large membership of the Partnership and the large number of outcome measures. In addition, there was no statutory responsibility for representatives from the various Executive departments to co-operate or work in partnership, and therefore to some extent it was based on a goodwill approach. Whilst it was encouraging to hear initial enthusiasm for the process, it will be a challenge to retain support for the Partnership and ensure its sustainability.

2.21 It was also unclear who would ultimately be responsible for the

³⁵ UNOCINI provides an assessment and planning framework to assist professionals in identifying children and their family's needs. The UNOCINI framework can also be used to make referrals to Social Services and access children's services.



governance of the Strategic Partnership. Whilst the Chief Executive Officer of the Health and Social Care Board chaired the Strategic Partnership, he did not have ultimate accountability for members who were part of other Executive departments or voluntary and community organisations. Although the members had shown initial commitment, Inspectors were not made aware of the accountability mechanisms should one or more of the members not follow through on their commitments. It was therefore also unclear how performance of the Strategic Partnership itself would be assessed and evaluated.


- 2.22 Inspectors met with one of the Junior Ministers from OFMDFM with regard to the inspection. The Junior Ministers were undergoing a review process of the work of their office in relation to children and young people and poverty and social exclusion. This involved a series of bi-lateral meetings with various departments and consultations prior to reviewing their approach to issues involving children and young people and updating the 10-year Strategy. This work would aim to make the approach to children and young people more co-ordinated and streamlined and therefore it would consider the development of the Strategic Partnership. The principle of early intervention was clearly favoured by the Junior Ministers with the Ministerial Sub-Committee seen as providing governance and accountability in this area. This period of work was seen as an opportunity for the Executive to develop appropriate structures and partnerships to deliver an early intervention approach.

Youth Justice Review

- 2.23 At the time of the inspection a team had been appointed by the Minister of Justice to undertake a review of youth justice. The Youth Justice Review team had given evidence to the Committee for Justice at the Northern Ireland Assembly in March 2011 on their preliminary findings. Mr John Graham, who led the team stated the following in evidence in relation to early interventions:³⁶ *'Given the nature of youth justice and youth crime, it is important to ensure a joined-up approach, so that all the agencies that are involved in interventions and supporting young people at risk are working together. At the same time, the right direction must come from the top down, which should be a strategy that is equally joined-up. It is not an issue for only the Department of Justice. Early intervention and prevention is about supporting families, strengthening schools, identifying problems with young people early and doing something about them. That requires a multi-agency, multi-problem strategic approach, from the top and at the local level.'*
- 2.24 The final report of the Review team was published in the Northern Ireland Assembly on 26 September 2011³⁷. The report commented on the strategic and practical arrangements for delivery of youth justice, stating: *'The importance of investing in the current generation of young people as part of the peace process cannot be overestimated. We suggest that the First and Deputy First Ministers and Ministers of Departments with key responsibilities relating to children need to commit themselves to prioritising children's issues and re-energising the government's 10-year Children's Strategy. Children who*

³⁶ Committee for Justice (2011). *Official report (Hansard): Youth Justice Review Team*, 10 March 2011. Belfast: Northern Ireland Assembly.

³⁷ Youth Justice Review Team (2011). *A review of the youth justice system in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: Department of Justice.



offend may receive targeted interventions from the criminal justice system but they should not, by virtue of this, be disconnected from the support and services available from universal providers. This general principle needs to inform joined-up thinking, policy and practice at the strategic, commissioning and delivery levels. At the local level, services for children and young people, including those who offend, should be delivered by multi-agency teams overseen by, and accountable to, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. Policy and professional practice relating to children should be child-friendly and not adult-centric and build on the success of the youth and community sector. The Criminal Justice Delivery Group, chaired by the Minister of Justice, along with the Criminal Justice Board, need to develop a greater strategic interest in youth justice and the connections with the wider children's strategy and delivery issues.'

Governance and oversight for youth justice

2.25 The actions for youth justice issues arising from the 10-year Strategy were, at the time of the inspection, overseen by the Youth Justice sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board. As highlighted above however, early interventions formed a very small part of this work. Inspectors were advised that it was planned that one of the thematic groups of the Strategic Partnership would be in relation to young people and criminal justice issues and therefore, to avoid duplication, the Youth Justice sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board would serve two functions.

2.26 The CJI inspection of Youth Diversion stated '*Inspectors found that the 10-year strategy was not driving the work done by criminal justice operatives, education and*

social welfare, or members of the voluntary and community sector as the overarching mechanism by which approaches in the justice sector could be drawn together. Officials and youth justice professionals told Inspectors that whilst the Criminal Justice Board had adopted governance of this area with regard to justice issues, key departments which have an impact on outcomes such as education, employment and learning and social services were not represented.' Similarly representatives of the criminal justice agencies interviewed for this inspection did not highlight the 10-year Strategy as influencing their work.

2.27 The report recommended that '*there should be cross-departmental governance of the justice element of the 10-year Strategy for children and young people to achieve better buy-in and co-ordination of effort (paragraph 2.8)*'. This recommendation may be addressed by the introduction of the Strategic Partnership if it delivers what is intended.

Police Service of Northern Ireland

2.28 Interventions with young people are referred to in the 2011-14 Northern Ireland Policing Board and PSNI Policing Plan in relation to the Prevent and Deter strand of the Integrated Offender Management system (now referred to as Reducing Offending in Partnership). The Reducing Offending in Partnership system provides agencies engaged with local criminal justice with a single coherent strategy for the management of a cohort of offenders. The target for the Prevent and Deter strand is to '*reduce crime and anti-social behaviour involving young people through early identification and effective intervention strategies*' by September 2013. This area of work will be covered further in CJI's




forthcoming inspection of prolific offenders. The PSNI have agreed that this preventative work will go through the Strategic Partnership as outlined above, with locality and outcome groups deciding what services are commissioned. The Youth Diversion Officers have subsequently been transferred to the Reducing Offending Teams.

- 2.29 In addition to the Strategic Partnership the PSNI had also been leading on work in relation to the Community Prioritisation Index. This aimed to identify and consider 'hotspots' (based on indices of community polarisation, social stress, disengagement, crime and disorder) and compare these with areas of need as identified by health and education to look at areas of overlap. The premise for this idea was that criminal justice, health, education and social development were likely to all be identifying similar areas as in need of additional support or funding.
- 2.30 This had led to the development of six 'pathfinder' areas (sites of most need identified from a total of 890 super output areas). Through a partnership model, representatives of Executive departments could consider outcomes and early intervention, collaboration and sustainability, and develop a model where resources for projects is centralised and local groups bid for funding. This model of centralised resources, rather than each department or agency offering funding individually, should significantly reduce duplication of funding but again needed commitment from agencies and departments. It should also be noted that the Strategic Partnership had also mapped areas of concern and these would be compared

with the pathfinder areas. This process was also in its infancy and therefore too early to assess any outcomes. It was positive that the PSNI was striving to gain better partnership and joined-up working with Executive departments and agencies, but there was potential for overlap with the Strategic Partnership, which the PSNI was also a member of.

Youth Justice Agency

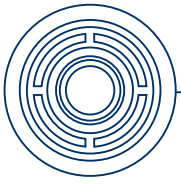
- 2.31 The Youth Justice Agency Corporate (2009-11) and Business (2010-11) Plan had a strategic objective under the key business area of Reducing Offending which is *'To reduce offending by children through supporting prevention, early intervention and diversion and by engaging them in targeted interventions to promote their reintegration with the community'*. One of the methods of delivery was to *'invest in partnerships aimed at preventing offending'*.
- 2.32 The Corporate and Business Plan also referred to an Action Framework on Youth Justice Priorities which it states was developed on a multi-agency cross-sectoral basis and set out those priorities which the youth justice sector believed to be most important, and how they intended to address them in a structured, co-ordinated way. It noted that three priority areas were identified, one of which was early intervention and support for children and families to prevent offending. The Youth Justice sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board provided the strategic oversight of the action framework.
- 2.33 The YJA highlighted that whilst they had a statutory responsibility for delivering court orders, the delivery of early interventions is not a statutory priority although the Agency is committed to



early interventions. The YJA stated their intention to build on this in their Corporate Plan although they were waiting to see what impact the report of the Youth Justice Review team would have on their strategic direction.

Northern Ireland Prison Service and Probation Board for Northern Ireland

2.34 The NIPS and the PBNI both had experience in delivery of early interventions as will be discussed in Chapter 3. The NIPS Corporate and Business Plan 2010-13 and the PBNI's Business Plan 2010-11 and Corporate Plan 2008-11 did not make reference to early interventions. However, this is to be expected as early interventions are not core business and not a statutory responsibility for these agencies.



CHAPTER 3:

Delivery



Level of early intervention delivery in Northern Ireland

- 3.1 During the inspection, Inspectors attempted to obtain information on the types and numbers of early intervention programmes in Northern Ireland. Inspectors were made aware of the Early Intervention Programmes for the Prevention of Offending from the outset and these formed a key element of the inspection. However, Inspectors were aware that there are a great many other projects, receiving funding from justice organisations, or the agencies of other Executive departments, which were also early intervention focussed.
- 3.2 Inspectors could not get a clear sense from any of the interviewees spoken to of the number, types and funding of early intervention programmes available in Northern Ireland. This is important in analysing the cost of spend on early intervention prior to being able to assess value for money. It also suggests that there is a danger that funding is being duplicated or wasted if there is no coherent regional co-ordination and time spent on preparing, submitting and reviewing business cases for funding which could be better spent on programme delivery. In addition the short-term nature of the projects (for example residentials over the summer period for young people in interface areas) could be seen as building false

expectations or as reactionary to events. The second report by Graham Allen MP provides a useful overview of the early interventions programmes being led by the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland. The extract from the report is provided in Appendix 3.

Identification of need for early interventions

- 3.3 Within the criminal justice area most identification of the need for interventions with children and young people came through the PSNI response or neighbourhood officers. Officers came into contact with young people in the community on a daily basis. Issues arose when young people were drinking alcohol or taking drugs, perceived to be behaving anti-socially and/or involved in lower level offences (for example criminal damage). In many of these cases officers described using a proportionate approach either taking them home to their parents, referring them to the Youth Diversion Officer or using discretionary processes to divert them out of the criminal justice system.
- 3.4 Officers advised that most parents were supportive of intervention by the police, especially if they could see that they had taken the opportunity to intervene and divert the young person away from potentially offending behaviour. Often the issues raised by the community




were, in the view of the officers spoken to, complaints about 'normal' adolescent behaviour (for example playing football, gathering in groups) and therefore did not even warrant a police response. Difficulties arose for officers when parents appeared uninterested in their child's behaviour or openly supported it, which left officers with limited opportunities for resolution.

- 3.5 At the time of the inspection the Youth Diversion Officers, as part of the ongoing Youth Diversion Scheme, were seen as the main point of contact for response and neighbourhood officers and a source of support and expert advice in relation to young people. The Youth Diversion Officers collated details of young people referred to them and identified those who were repeat referrals and therefore could benefit from further intervention. Usually however this occurred at the same time as some sort of criminal process (for example by way of caution, informed warning or diversionary youth conference) and therefore it is questionable whether this can be considered true early intervention. However, Youth Diversion Officers were also involved in early intervention work in relation to anti-social behaviour and 'at risk' behaviour (non-criminal behaviour). These officers were also involved in early information-sharing in relation to at risk young people with partner statutory agencies in order to identify needs and services.
- 3.6 Referral to one of the five projects in the Early Intervention for the Prevention of Offending Programme was made by the referring agent (for example police, Social Worker, Education Welfare Officer) and the appropriateness of the enquiry was made by determination as

to whether the young person met the referral criteria (age, location etc). The Keyworker from the relevant project then completed an initial assessment with the child/young person's parent which looked at risk and protective factors across five domains (individual, parenting, family influences, community influences, and education factors). The projects had raised awareness of their work with the statutory agencies in their area in order to highlight the opportunity for referral.

Roots of Empathy

- 3.7 Roots of Empathy originated in Canada in 1996. It is referred to as a '*model of social innovation*' and has two programmes: the flagship programme of the same name for children in elementary school (Roots of Empathy) and Seeds of Empathy, a program for children aged three to five in childcare settings. The programme has also been delivered in the USA, the Isle of Man, New Zealand and, since the 2010-11 school year, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and Scotland.
- 3.8 The key element of the programmes are classroom visits by an infant and parent every three weeks during the school year. Through guided observations of this loving relationship, children learn to identify and reflect on their own thoughts and feelings and those of others. Both programmes have independently researched supporting evidence which show a dramatic effect in reducing levels of aggression among children, while raising their social and emotional competence and increasing empathy.
- 3.9 The PSNI had trained two officers to facilitate a pilot Roots of Empathy



programme in C District within the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust area. The programme was also being run in the Belfast Trust area. The PSNI officers were therefore able to facilitate the programmes within local primary schools. An independent research evaluation of this work was planned to be undertaken by Queen's University Belfast. This had not yet been forthcoming however. The PSNI had supported the pilot, which ended in 2011 but, at the time of the inspection were unable to provide resources to the programme for a number of operational reasons. This was obviously in the context of a reducing police budget and resources which led to focus on core services. The time commitments required for the training and delivery of officers for Roots of Empathy were obviously therefore in high demand for other activities.

Citizenship and Safety Education (CASE) Programme

3.10 The CASE Programme had been running in primary and post-primary schools for a number of years. The Programme provided a platform for police officers to work in partnership with teachers, parents and pupils to attend schools and community groups and present lessons that promote skills, attitudes and values around issues from drugs awareness to anti-social behaviour. In addition, the contact with schools provided a useful mechanism for making officers aware of community contacts and issues in their local area. In the school year 2009-10 CASE was delivered in 581 schools. This equated to 48.5% of all schools in Northern Ireland comprising 44% of

primary schools, 65% of secondary schools, 76% of grammar schools and 37.5% of special schools. The number of Protestant schools visited was greater than the number of Catholic schools (330 vs. 191), however the PSNI had been working with the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools to address this. In September 2011 an announcement was made that Catholic schools in Northern Ireland are to be offered visits by the Police Service in an attempt to overcome traditional barriers between them³⁸. The addition of these Catholic schools, to the existing programme within Protestant schools, is a positive step forward in reaching schools where historically there may have been a difficult relationship with the police.

3.11 Prior to the inspection the deployment of CASE officers had changed from a centralised model where officers were based in the Community Safety Unit, to one where CASE officers were based in neighbourhood teams, and the responsibility for the delivery of CASE was shared between all neighbourhood officers in the team. Since September 2010 the PSNI had also adopted a more risk-based approach to the CASE programme where schools had been classified as Priority, Important or Desirable (based on a grading criteria of issues such as social deprivation, disengagement etc., drawn from the Community Prioritisation Index as outlined in Chapter 2). The aim of this was to focus the CASE Programme in areas of greatest need and where historically communities have been harder to reach and less supportive of police.

³⁸ BBC News website (2011). *Catholic schools to be visited by PSNI officers*. Accessed 30 September 2011 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-15115386>



3.12 Concerns were raised with Inspectors that the recent changes would make the delivery of a comprehensive school education service much more difficult due to the competing priorities of neighbourhood duties and CASE delivery. It was highlighted that this could also lead to commitments made to schools being broken or officers without sufficient experience delivering CASE, with a resulting loss of confidence in the police. These concerns varied across districts as there had been differences in the way the CASE model was being implemented (some areas had retained one specific CASE officer whose role was ring-fenced whereas others had shared the work across the whole team).

3.13 Inspectors believe that it is highly appropriate that CASE officers are situated within neighbourhood teams in order that information and intelligence is shared, to enable better succession planning and develop local knowledge. The PSNI should also continuously strive to develop relationships with schools and young people from harder to reach areas. However, it is imperative that where commitments are made to schools, particularly those which have previously not welcomed police contact, they are fulfilled appropriately in order to maintain, and in some cases, raise confidence in the police.

Prison! Me! No Way!

3.14 The NIPS provided around £25,000 per year to support the delivery of Prison! Me! No Way! which had been in existence for 12 years in Northern Ireland. The scheme aims to educate young people about the realities of life


in prison, different types of crime and prevent them from getting involved in offending behaviour. The scheme had also delivered a crime week in partnership with the police and emergency services. It operates with prison officers and staff volunteering to deliver sessions in schools, youth clubs etc., which is matched with four days release time from their NIPS duties.

3.15 Inspectors were impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm shown for the scheme by those involved. Staff from one education programme who had benefited from a Prison! Me! No Way! session said that young people found it very impactful. The funding for the scheme in the future is yet to be decided due to budget cuts for the NIPS. Inspectors appreciate that this work is not core business for the Service and that the costs of overtime to fill the gaps left by those engaged in these activities are prohibitive. There are difficulties in demonstrating the value for money and evidence the outcomes of the scheme but unless this is forthcoming it will be hard to justify the future business case for such funding.

Early Interventions for the Prevention of Offending Programme

3.16 As outlined above, funding was made available since 2008 from the mainstream budget, with an initial tender for three years, to projects across the five health and social care trust areas. An independent evaluation was commissioned by the Health and Social Care Board and undertaken by Independent Research Solutions in 2011³⁹ which reviewed the outcomes of these projects and outlined

³⁹ Independent Research Solutions (2011). *Evaluation of the Early Intervention Programme for the Prevention of Offending 2008-2011*. Belfast: Health and Social Care Board.



recommendations for improvement. This report will therefore not repeat the content of that extensive report but summarise information relevant to this inspection.

3.17 Whilst the five projects operate slightly differently, their basic premise and target population are broadly similar. The projects aims to provide intensive support services for children and young people aged 8-13 at risk of offending (and their families) who are at risk of engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour. Methods vary but all include some element of individual work and family or parental work with some including residential elements, groupwork and/or education. The five projects are as follows:

- Children and Parent Support - run by NIACRO, operating in the Belfast and Southern Trusts;
- Northern Area Early Intervention project - run by Action for Children, operating in the Northern Trust; and
- Strength 2 Strength - run by Extern, operating in the Western and South Eastern Trusts.

3.18 In terms of the evaluation report the following points are of note:

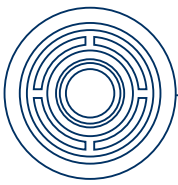
- two-fifths of the young people referred were known to police;
- the largest number of referrals came from Social Services (45% year one, 42% year two) with the PSNI the second largest referrer (16% year one, 8% year two);
- in the first two years there were 409 admissions to the Programme;
- the majority of admissions were male (77% in 2009-2010);
- almost half of young people had one agency other than the referrer engaged with them (47%), and 28%

were engaged with two agencies other than the referrer;

- the length of time young people were engaged with the projects ranged from four to eleven months;
- 76% of young people completed the Programme in the second year; and
- in the second year of the Programme the average cost of a service was £4,610.

3.19 Inspectors met with managers and staff from all three providers. They appeared motivated and positive and were clearly highly knowledgeable and skilled with backgrounds in youth, community or social work. All providers were in agreement that three years was too short a period of time to get staff sufficiently skilled, raise awareness of the Programme and complete work with a sufficient number of young people to be able to demonstrate effective outcomes.

3.20 Some concerns were raised with Inspectors about the Early Intervention Programme model. One related to the fact that in some cases young people worked with Keyworkers outside of the family environment. Therefore questions were raised as to the sustainability of any behavioural change when the young person would inevitably return to the same environment where, for example, there were inappropriate social influences, or their parent(s) struggled to cope or had problems of their own. Some of the projects did include a family/parental work element but this appeared to be in addition to individual work rather than as a basis for the project. The evaluation report recommended that all projects should consider the use of parenting support programmes.



3.21 In addition concerns were raised about the upper age limit of the Programme being 13 and therefore a deficit in provision for young people aged 14 and above. The Programme age range was apparently determined to cover the period of transition to post-primary school. There was some provision for young people of secondary/post-primary school age but this was not co-ordinated in the same way, and therefore there is a danger that these young people lose out on such support.

3.22 At the lower age limit there were also some concerns raised with a lack of support for young people aged six and seven years old. Providers generally only took children who were aged seven and a half upwards, mainly those who had siblings also engaged in the programme. In relation to younger children however it is unlikely, in most cases, to be helpful to them to be referred to a programme which addresses their behaviour for the prevention of offending. In most cases there would be a greater need for parental support to help them to develop their parental skills, which could be provided by other types of early intervention.

3.23 Young people in a residential care placement had also been excluded from the Programme as it was felt they already had a corporate parent in the form of Social Services, and therefore had access to services. It is well known that children and young people from a residential care background are over-represented in the criminal justice system and therefore additional support for these young people is clearly important, although potentially not

through the format of these family support-type projects.

3.24 Recently the criteria for entry to the Programme had been extended to include those children and young people who had been subject to a caution from the police. This was a positive step in providing further opportunity for intervention for young people who had offended at a low level. However there were concerns raised as to whether this would increase the number of referrals made to an unmanageable level, leading to delays in young people receiving the service. It was too early to assess the impact of this change but this will require careful monitoring.

The role of the Youth Justice Agency in early interventions

3.25 As outlined in Chapter 2 the YJA were involved in, and supportive of, the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. The Chief Executive of the YJA chaired the Youth Justice sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board, which would in the future potentially act as the sub-group for the Partnership. The Agency had an Early Interventions Manager appointed on a temporary basis that had oversight and co-ordination responsibilities in relation to the Early Intervention Programme as highlighted above. The strategic oversight of the Early Intervention Programme was at two levels; the first being operationally through a multi-agency Steering Group made up of representation from the PSNI, the YJA, the Health and Social Care Trust and the Education and Library Board. The second oversight mechanism was through the Youth Justice sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board as outlined above.



3.26 Many interviewees raised concerns about the withdrawal of the YJA from the provision of non-statutory support to young people at risk of, or involved in, offending. The Agency had, in recent years, been prioritising statutory work with young people who have been referred by the Public Prosecution Service or Courts rather than voluntary attendees (i.e. those who had not received an order from the court to engage). Whilst the Agency expressed their commitment to the ethos of early interventions and continued to support projects (see below) they felt that budget restrictions and the increased number of court orders had left them with limited resources to engage in early interventions fully.

3.27 The impact of this on police colleagues and other service providers was that they felt the opportunities available to support young people, where once they would have sought assistance from the YJA, were now limited.

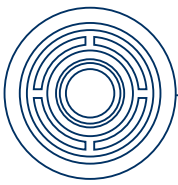
3.28 At the time of the inspection the YJA had an external funding budget which was used to fund community and voluntary projects. The Agency contributed funding to a range of early intervention projects. This came from its external funding budget of £735,000. In addition £360,000 was funded from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to the YJA directly to support the Choices project. The Agency also funded a further £50,000 from its external funding budget into Choices. Providers from the voluntary and community sector then tendered to deliver Choices and other projects. The YJA were part of the Government funding database to ensure there was no duplication in funding with other

departments. The various projects funded via this method are summarised below.

3.29 The range and overlap of projects funded, highlights the issue raised of a lack of co-ordination of criminal justice funding and oversight of early intervention work. The YJA advised that they were trying to move away from historical funding and looking more at value for money and an outcome-based approach. They stated they were asking providers to look at how early intervention keeps the young person from coming into the criminal justice system for example, by using parents and self-evaluation tools, measures of school attendance etc.

Choices Family Support Programme

3.30 Choices operated between the YJA, Action for Children, Barnardo's and Ballymena and Larne Volunteer Centre in the Northern Trust Area. The service helped children (aged 10-17 years) to develop positive relationships with others, strategies to promote their own personal safety, become aware of their rights and responsibilities, develop as active members of a community, understand that choices bring consequences including the importance of rules and laws, and the implications of breaching these, including the effects or impacts of anti-social behaviour. It was similar therefore to the Northern Area Early Intervention Project as outlined above but with a broader age range. However it also sought to train local volunteers to support the delivery of group work programmes and parenting work. There were therapeutic workers for young people in the higher-risk groups. The project was funded for three years until March 2011, with



referrals originating from social services, education, police and family centres. The YJA facilitated the strategic group which oversees the work.

FACES: Family and Child Empowerment Services

3.31 This was a multi-agency initiative delivered by Extern which was aimed at providing intensive support to children and young people in South and East Belfast who were having difficulty within the education system, at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviours or at risk of being received into a care placement. The project also aimed to empower parents and carers to manage their children's behaviours in a positive and constructive way, enabling the children to remain living at home and preventing the necessity of a care placement. The families may be offered therapeutic services and/or be referred for specialist support from other agencies. Extern worked with the YJA, the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Education Welfare Service in delivering this project. The involvement of the YJA was along the same lines as the Early Intervention Programmes above with an oversight and monitoring role.

Newry/Armagh and Dungannon Adolescent Partnership

3.32 Barnardo's delivered two adolescent services in the Southern Trust for 13-19 year olds (designed to avoid overlap with the Child and Parent Support Project in the Southern Trust). The partnerships were multi-agency teams involving social services, the YJA, education, the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and Barnardo's. The partnerships were primarily funded by social services and the Health and

Social Care Board through the Children's Services Planning process but the YJA provide support by way of accommodation in their offices. The YJA also sat on the Partnership Steering Group. About half of the young people referred to this project were involved in the criminal justice system. Young people were engaged for an average of eight to 12 months in the programme.

Youth Diversion Forums

3.33 The Youth Diversion Forums were an initiative led in 2006 by the PSNI and the YJA. These attempted to replace the PSNI's Juvenile Liaison Bureaux, the loss of which had significantly reduced the opportunity for agencies to communicate and co-ordinate services for children vulnerable to, or involved in, offending behaviour. The Youth Diversion Forums introduced more formal and structured inter-agency assessment, planning, intervention, review and evaluation processes. The Forums sign-posted young people to appropriate services for their needs. Over time the Forums developed to different levels throughout Northern Ireland due to a number of factors including:

- the absence of a multi-agency information sharing protocol;
- a lack of understanding and commitment at senior level within statutory organisations; and
- resource limitations.

Various incarnations of the Youth Diversion Forum approach were still in existence in some areas of Northern Ireland during the inspection but Inspectors were advised that there were plans for Child Intervention Panels to replace these and therefore they were not reviewed as part of this report.

Child Intervention Panels

3.34 Three Child Intervention Panels were being piloted in the South Eastern Trust area for one year between June 2010 and June 2011 after which they were independently evaluated. A member of staff from the YJA was the Project Manager and it was overseen by the Youth Justice sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board. The Panels were multi-agency consisting of representatives from the PSNI, Social Services, the YJA and Education Welfare. However voluntary organisations that provide early intervention services were not routinely represented on Child Intervention Panels (or Youth Diversion Forums) due to data protection issues. Service providers (from the voluntary sector) had the capacity to attend a Panel meeting prior to any engagement with a young person and/or their family, as well as periodically in order to update the panel. Such representation on a routine basis may be helpful in order to provide professional advice about the services available and the appropriateness of the service for the young person. The full involvement of service providers is a model that works well in relation to offenders for the referral panel for Approved Premises⁴⁰ and therefore such a model could be applied to these Panels.

3.35 The main aim of the Panels was 'to identify the most vulnerable children under 18 years at the early stage and to provide them with co-ordinated services in order to divert them from offending or problematic behaviours'⁴¹. The remit of the Panels was expanded from the Youth Diversion

Forum approach to include referrals from any of the participating agencies for problematic behaviour which might lead to offending and which would benefit from a multi-agency response. In addition, a greater emphasis was placed on linking children and young people to support delivered by the voluntary and community sectors. It should be noted however that the Extern Strength 2 Strength Project (part of the Early Interventions Programme) had not yet received any referrals from the Panel for their services at the time of the inspection.

3.36 The Panels met every two weeks to discuss and decide action for young people referred to them. Cases referred were assessed by the Panel to identify those at lower levels of need (Hardiker levels 1 and 2⁴²) who did not meet the threshold for social services intervention and therefore were suitable for referral from the Panel to a service. A case co-ordinator was appointed to oversee the case. If there were serious concerns then the case was taken over by Social Services Gateway Teams⁴³ in line with UNOCINI processes.

3.37 Funding was provided for the pilot by the Department of Justice and the PSNI with 'in kind' support from the YJA for the Project Manager's position and IT support as well as office accommodation. The Youth Justice sub-group of the Criminal Justice Board acted as a Strategic Management Group for the pilot. It should be noted that during the course of this inspection a difficulty with administrative support for

40 See CJJI's inspection of Approved Premises (2008) available at www.cjini.org

41 Independent Research Services (2011). *Evaluation of the Child Intervention Panels: Interim Report*. Coleraine: IRS.

42 The Hardiker Model is a framework to assess level of need for support. There are four levels representing the increasing need for support; Universal (level 1), Vulnerable (level 2), Complex (level 3) and Severe (level 4).

43 Gateway Teams in Health and Social Care Trusts have responsibility for receive referrals regarding child protection concerns and for completion of the initial assessment which will inform the future direction as regards case management.




the Panels (which was provided by the YJA and funded by the Department of Justice) led to their suspension for a substantial period of time. During this period of suspension the practices returned to those which had existed previously where Social Services Gateway Teams received a referral from agencies. Anecdotal evidence from the PSNI suggested that this had led to a large number of forms being sent to Social Services which were usually deemed not to meet the threshold for their involvement; therefore these young people would not receive any service from agencies, which may have been provided through the Child Intervention Panel had it been in operation. Social workers who had worked with the Panels therefore saw this as a real loss.

- 3.38 Although, at the time of writing, the final evaluation of the pilot was yet to be completed, the interim report highlighted the benefits of the Panels and some issues that needed addressing to ensure their success. Between July 2010 and February 2011 the three Panels had received almost 600 referrals and anecdotally Inspectors were told that the majority of these originated from the PSNI. Some interviewees raised concerns that this type of forum, which has been developed and can be seen to be led by the justice system, could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. It is a challenge therefore to ensure that such a process does not draw young people unnecessarily into the justice system rather than divert them from it.
- 3.39 A key issue in relation to diverting young people away from the criminal justice system is ensuring that opportunities for early intervention are seized as they appear, rather than waiting

for the outcomes of formal criminal justice processes. Observations at one Child Intervention Panel indicated that, in some cases where the young person had been referred to the Public Prosecution Service for a decision on a prosecution file, there were delays in seeking support for the young person pending a direction from the prosecutor. Whilst this could be a one-off occurrence, and is at odds with the aims and objectives of the Panels (which outline the need to identify and provide services at an early stage) such issues could mean delays of several months and that the opportunity to intervene is missed as the young person has already entered the criminal justice system.

- 3.40 In addition, it was noted by Youth Diversion Officers spoken to that most referrals were for offending behaviour (rather than for problematic behaviour which would lend itself better to the prevention of offending and early interventions). If this is the case then it is critical that such issues are addressed.
- 3.41 The PSNI assured Inspectors that efforts had been made in recent months to engage further with prosecutors in the relevant regions and enhance their awareness about the Child Intervention Panels. The involvement in a Panel could be taken into consideration by the prosecutor during the decision making process. The Panels had also been advised that cases should be dealt with in a maximum 14 days in order to avoid undue delay.
- 3.42 Inspectors also heard frustrations from Youth Diversion Officers (which supports the findings of the interim report) about the lack of continuity of representatives from Social Services at



the Panels. If there was no-one from Social Services in attendance then the Panel had to be deferred which could cause delays for young people.

3.43 There was also the potential for overlap with other such referral groups which operated across Northern Ireland. Multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour Forums had been set up in response to legislation introducing Anti-Social Behaviour Orders. Whilst these forums covered both adults and young people, without effective communication processes between the two bodies there could be the potential for overlap with Child Intervention Panels. This had been addressed by the YJA representative at the Panel also being the representative at the Anti-Social Behaviour Forum. An agreement was in existence that a referral mechanism through this representative should take place providing both bodies with relevant information as and when appropriate. There is also a potential overlap with Family Support Hubs which are outlined in more detail below.

3.44 In addition, it was unclear how the Child Intervention Panels would feature in the plans for outcome and locality groups under the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. Again, it is critical that there was co-ordination of such services to avoid duplication or young people slipping through gaps in provision.

Family Support Hubs

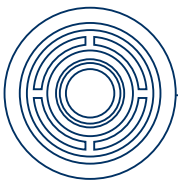
3.45 Some stakeholders highlighted to Inspectors the benefits of a non-criminal

justice led approach to the co-ordination of support for preventing offending and family difficulties. The Family Support Hub model was proposed as an alternative approach based on a family and social work approach rather than a criminal justice approach. The integration of the young people whose cases are reviewed and managed by a Child Intervention Panel into the model of the Family Support Hub was something that was raised as a potential development over the longer-term.

3.46 The Family Support Hubs were a network of agencies (both voluntary/community and statutory) who work directly with parents and children in a local area. The Hub engaged with families who did not meet the threshold for statutory social work support and aimed to avoid duplication and improve co-ordination of service delivery to individual families. The Hubs provided early intervention family support services to vulnerable families and children aged 0-18 depending on services available in the local area. Hubs could also signpost families to other services (using the Family Support Database⁴⁴).

3.47 The Hubs were suggested as having a perception of neutrality to the families using them as, although funded by the Health and Social Care Board and receiving referrals from Social Services, Education Welfare, criminal justice etc, they are not viewed as being run by statutory agencies. This is important, not just from a criminal justice perspective but also from a social

⁴⁴ The Family Support Database is a recently developed directory of services for children and their families in Northern Ireland, see www.familysupportni.gov.uk



services perspective, where some families view the statutory agencies with suspicion or believe that accepting support from statutory bodies could lead to the removal of their children into care.

3.48 The Youth Justice Review supports this view stating that: *‘As we have seen here in Northern Ireland, voluntary youth and community services can draw in support from volunteers, parents and the local community, engaging people in ways the statutory sector is unable to do. It can mediate between young people and law enforcement agencies and build support for the rule of law. It can offer opportunities for young people to see beyond the horizon of their immediate environment and nurture aspiration and opportunity. It also connects with the most isolated, disadvantaged and hard to reach young people who will not engage with statutory organisations’.* The Team recommended that *‘The success of youth and community work in Northern Ireland should be built on by providing additional resources to support its expansion, allowing other agencies to draw on the skills and expertise of youth and community workers in engaging young people, especially those who offend’.*

3.49 Inspectors visited a Family Support Hub in the Western Trust. The approach there was explained to be very much centred on the child and the family in a consensual relationship. The referring agency was expected to play their part as a member of the team around the child with only relevant agencies expected to participate on an agreed basis with the family. In this particular Hub the local PSNI Youth Diversion Officer was part of the management group and therefore there was a

relevant criminal justice input, with some referrals coming from the PSNI.

3.50 At the time of the inspection the Hubs were only operational in some areas of Northern Ireland and at different stages of development. The accountability and governance of the Hubs was highlighted as a potential difficulty by some stakeholders, with a potential lack of accountability by statutory agencies. The same issue was not prevalent in the Child Intervention Panel model, with it being led by statutory agencies.

3.51 The focus on Family Support Hubs by the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership and Children’s Services Planning in the Trusts had led the criminal justice agencies to focus on how Child Intervention Panels could be integrated into this delivery model. A pilot had therefore been agreed to take place in the Northern Health and Social Care Trust for six months which would link the Child Intervention Panel into the Family Support Hub. The details of this had not been decided upon at the time of the inspection but the project lead in the PSNI envisaged the Panel as a satellite of the Hub with information fed back and forth as appropriate. The evaluation of this pilot could potentially be compared to a model of a ‘pure’ Child Intervention Panel (isolated from the Family Support Hub) in another Trust area, but again, the details of whether and how this could be done had not been agreed.

3.52 A similar model to the Family Support Hub was in existence in West Belfast and the Greater Shankill known as ‘Integrated Services for Children and Young People’. The West Belfast



Integrated Services Programme was part of the West Belfast Partnership Board. The programme worked with young people aged 5-18 focusing on four themes of health and well-being, family support, education/learner support and youth support. A variety of agencies referred young people and multi-disciplinary teams in the local area provided them with a service. The West Belfast Integrated Services Programme Manager was a member of the Strategic Partnership and sat on the Belfast Outcomes Group.

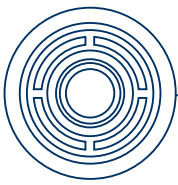
- 3.53 The Strategic Partnership offers an opportunity to look at this model further in the context of early interventions in a structured and co-ordinated manner. It was apparent to Inspectors that there was the danger of significant overlap and duplication between the Family Support Hub model and the Child Intervention Panels, not just in terms of membership but also in potential population of referrals. Therefore failure to co-ordinate these two models could be expensive, time consuming and unhelpful to children and their families or lead to regional variations and inconsistencies. Each model has different perceived benefits with the Child Intervention Panels bringing a greater level of governance and accountability to the Family Support Hub, together with involvement from statutory agencies, albeit potentially in a referral and advisory capacity. The integration of the two approaches should ensure consistency and avoid duplication with input from both statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector.

Prince's Trust

- 3.54 The Prince's Trust ran a variety of programmes for young people, usually in the older age ranges (from ages 14 up to 30), who were not in employment, education or training and therefore often at risk of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour. Inspectors were advised that 20% of the Prince's Trust client base had either been involved in offending or were at risk of offending. The Team Programme was a 12-week community project with colleges for young people who were not 'work-ready' to build their confidence and vocational skills. Included within this was a two week work experience placement. From April 2008 to March 2011, the PSNI had provided 22 secondees to The Trust's Team Programme (nine of these during 2010-11). The Prince's Trust received referrals from the YJA and the PBNI for their services.

District police interventions with children and young people

- 3.55 Officers from neighbourhood teams spoken to advised Inspectors about local initiatives to engage with children and young people and prevent offending. Examples ranged from cross-community initiatives, prison visits, work with youth clubs, residential activities, midnight soccer and inter-generational events. The main barrier to these activities was a lack of funding sources but the range of events demonstrated the initiative of the officers concerned and their commitment to engaging with young people. However, again there appeared to be lack of co-ordination of these activities in the wider early interventions context, variations in sustainability and limited sharing of good practice.



Probation Board for Northern Ireland

3.56 In 2001 the PBNI had set-up the IMPACT (Inclusive Model of Partnership Against Car Theft) car crime project in West Belfast. The project had involved participation from statutory and voluntary organisations, and had been developed in response to high levels of car crime by young people in that area. The project included the three tiers of; education, diversionary and intervention. The education tier included education and prevention programmes in primary and secondary schools and youth clubs, whilst the preventative and diversionary programmes of work were targeted at those vulnerable to involvement in car theft activity.

3.57 An evaluation of the project in 2005 stated that *'IMPACT has made a significant contribution to the fact that the level of car crime in West Belfast has fallen dramatically in the past three years'*. Figures showed that the level of unauthorised takings of vehicles had fallen by 92% and the level of stolen vehicles recovered in West Belfast was down by 47%. The project ended by agreement in September 2010.

3.58 Similar to the issues by the YJA raised above, the PBNI did not have sufficient resources to work with non-adjudicated offenders and they had seen their client base move towards those at the higher end of the offending spectrum. However, Probation was a member of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

3.59 The PBNI also provided funding to NIACRO in support of their family work for offenders, which included working with siblings of offenders who could be considered at risk of offending. The PBNI were not heavily involved in the Early Interventions Programme but one provider had commented that they had received some referrals from them for siblings of their clients.



Measurement of outcomes

- 4.1 In terms of outcomes in relation to preventing offending or entry into the criminal justice system, few projects were able to provide evidence of robust monitoring and long-term evaluation. Partly this was due to the length of time some of the projects had been running for but there were other issues which are similar to those raised in the Allen report.
- 4.2 The Early Intervention Programmes used Farrington's risk factors to monitor progress at referral, review stage and closure and include the family and referring agency. However, other early interventions projects used different tools for the assessment of risk and protective factors even within the same provider (for example strengths and difficulties) which therefore made evaluation of outcomes difficult. The evaluation report of the programmes recommended that the use of the UNOCINI template forms for assessment and referral should be considered to standardise the approach. When multiplied across the myriad of providers of the different interventions programmes in Northern Ireland the problem becomes even more complex, and therefore it is virtually impossible to compare the outcomes of different projects.
- 4.3 The assessment of long-term outcomes was also problematic. For example, some projects reported that they received follow-up information from the police as to whether young people previously known to them had come to their attention during or on completion of the programme. However, this information tended to be anecdotal, short-term information and informally obtained via personal contacts rather than in a structured way. The evaluation report suggested that interviews should be held with children and parents at the one-year post-discharge stage as well as obtaining information on offending.
- 4.4 Feedback was usually sought from the young person themselves and from their parent or guardian at the end of the programme, although this was not always provided. In addition, for the Early Interventions Programme the projects sought feedback from the referring agency but it is unclear to what extent this was anecdotal or based on sound evidence. This reinforces the point made by Graham Allen MP (highlighted earlier) that *'Without robust information with which to make comparisons, budget holders and potential investors face the problems of equivalence and accountability for outcomes'*.



4.5 The limited evaluation of outcomes was something the YJA had recognised as an issue. They had asked service providers to look more closely at how early interventions prevent young people from coming into the criminal justice system. There is however, a danger in asking service providers to evaluate their work in this way with the potential for perceptions of a lack of objectivity should these same deliverers tender for future contracts. Any findings therefore need to be confirmed by entirely independent parties. Work in this area was currently being led by the Manager from the YJA who was responsible for providing oversight of the Early Intervention Programme. The Early Interventions Manager was working to ensure consistency of approach and referral criteria and developing practice standards for the projects.

4.6 Longer-term evaluation was also in development stage and different criteria were being considered and might take the form of a review of the young person one year post-discharge with the consent of the parents. Possible measures included re-referrals, removal from the Child Protection Register, information on offending, increases in educational capacity (based on teacher/school assessment) and school attendance. It was too early to say what the outcome of this work would be.

4.7 The Early Interventions Manager had assisted the Professional Advisor in the Health and Social Care Board in developing an outcomes framework with high level outcomes, which would feed into monitoring by the Board and ultimately the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. It had

also been developed to incorporate the UNOCINI system. Unfortunately, due to other operational demands, the secondment to the Early Interventions Manager post was due to end during the period of the inspection and it was not clear therefore who would continue to assist from a justice perspective with this work.

The views of young people and their parents/guardians

4.8 The evaluation of the Early Interventions Programmes sought and reported on the views of young people about the specific project they were involved with. Generally views from young people and their parents were positive about the staff, the projects themselves, the way their views were sought and they were kept updated and the fact that such support was made available for them. Some concerns were raised by parents about the availability of further support once the engagement with the project had concluded. However, all parents reported at least some improvements in their child's behaviour.

4.9 As the evaluation of the Early Interventions Programme had undertaken these interviews CJI did not repeat this work. Instead Inspectors spoke to groups of young people involved in other types of community based projects (not necessarily labelled as early intervention but working with disadvantaged and/or disengaged young people) from a number of providers. The purpose of this was not to inspect the individual providers and projects but to ask young people about the benefits they gained from engagement in these projects to find out what works. The groups were in a variety of locations,



run by voluntary and community sector organisations and involved young people whose ages ranged from 14 to 17.

- 4.10 Young people told Inspectors that the groups helped to give them something to do, keeping them off the streets and involving them in a variety of activities. Activities ranged from recreational excursions such as outdoor pursuits, sports, trips to the local cinema or bowling alley, educational activities, work around wellbeing and healthy lifestyles and work in their communities. Some young people had been involved in work covering issues of anti-social behaviour, alcohol and drug use and consequences of behaviour.
- 4.11 Young people identified that being involved in the groups had assisted in developing their confidence and self-esteem as well as, in some cases, improving relationships and lines of communication within families. Young people felt able to give their opinions and feedback about the work of these groups. A couple of young people contrasted this to the school environment which they perceived to be more formal. All young people stated they had built up good relationships with the youth workers they were involved with. This was illustrated by the fact that some young people mentioned that they would discuss any problems they had with the youth workers rather than within their own families.
- 4.12 Young people also identified the benefits of these types of projects in keeping young people out of trouble and off the

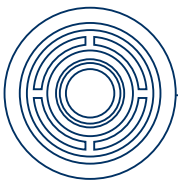
streets where they felt they were more likely to become involved in anti-social behaviour, consume alcohol and drugs and fight with other young people. One young male commented that the project showed young people that they could “*have a lifestyle that doesn’t involve rioting and fighting*”.

- 4.13 Young people were asked about the longevity of the projects in their area. Most commented that they had seen other projects come and go and this was particularly the case when diversionary projects were set up for the summer period around the Twelfth of July parades. Some young people felt that there was a need for longer-term funding for projects in order to ensure they ran for a sufficient length of time for them to be involved.

Early intervention with harder to reach groups

- 4.14 Agency representatives, stakeholders and service providers did not raise any particular difficulties in reaching out to children and young people from a diverse range of backgrounds or groups of children who may be disadvantaged or over-represented in the criminal justice system, with the exception of children from a care background. The large proportion of children from looked-after or residential care backgrounds in criminal justice settings has been well documented in CJI’s previous reports⁴⁵ and the picture was similar in relation to early interventions. One provider offered early intervention projects specifically targeted around the care system (for example the Extern Janus and Linx programmes).

⁴⁵ See for example CJI’s inspection reports of the Juvenile Justice Centre available at www.cjini.org



4.15 Difficulties in accessing universal and targeted support was raised as an issue for children and young people in rural communities, for example due to the distances between services and the lack of opportunity for young people who may have been excluded from their local services (such as youth clubs) and are then unable to access another one nearby. Rural areas were also highlighted as being more difficult for staff from service providers to access but effective planning aimed to overcome this.

4.16 Access for children and young people from minority ethnic or foreign national communities was raised as a potential issue due to language or cultural barriers but the numbers within the system were not considered to be large. Children and young people from the Travelling Community did not appear to be accessing the early intervention services visited but targeted services were provided by specialist organisations such as An Múna Tober, although funding was raised as an issue for such organisations.

4.17 The draft Northern Ireland Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14 proposed establishing regional sub-groups to plan for specific groups of children and young people and to address key issues. The groups proposed were those for young carers; children and young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties; children with a disability; transition for disabled children and young people; black and minority ethnic children; and children and young people and offending.

Value for money

4.18 Mainstream funding from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety was approximately £1 million for the Early Interventions Programme. The Programme was developed in liaison with the Northern Ireland Office (prior to the devolution of policing and justice) but they were unable to provide funding for it. The evaluation of the Early Intervention Programmes recommended that, *'in light of the positive outcomes in many domains of the children's and their parent's lives that further funding be made available to ensure the needs of all children who require such support are met'*. The report suggests that *'the Programme should be developed further with support from the Department of Justice and the Department of Education'*.

4.19 In addition to the funding of this specific programme the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety provided £3.5 million as regional funding for family support packages. Some of these packages were targeted specifically for children vulnerable to offending. The remainder were not specifically linked to offending although it is likely that all family support would make a contribution to justice outcomes.

4.20 As highlighted in Chapter 3 the YJA had an external funding panel and early interventions scheme which was used to fund projects. The Agency contributed funding to a range of early intervention projects from its external funding budget of £735,000 (which covered a range of projects including early intervention). An additional £360,000 was funded from the Department of Health, Social



Services and Public Safety to the YJA directly to support the Choices project. The Agency also funded a further £50,000 from its external funding budget into the Choices project.

- 4.21 It was envisaged that the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership would provide funding at the outcome group level to provide services. The need for a shift towards direct funding from Executive departments for early interventions to be reflected in the business plans of the agencies was noted. A shared budget for children and young people’s services which all relevant departments contributed to was also highlighted as key to a joined-up approach.
- 4.22 One difficulty raised in relation to value for money was that funding cycles tended to be on a three year basis. This created issues because of the short time period, particularly in relation to the first cycle of a new project. This could lead to a reduction in the numbers of

young people accessing quality services due to the difficulties in getting services set-up, building relationships with agencies, staff appropriately trained and skilled and evaluations completed in only three years. Some interviewees commented that a five-year funding cycle would be more appropriate as it would mean less time was spent on applying for and justifying funding and more time delivering services to young people.

- 4.23 As outlined in Chapter 1 costs in custody in Northern Ireland range between £132,904 and £267,991 per occupant per year⁴⁶ and costs for an occupant in a residential care home on average £156,967 per year.⁴⁷ Costs were provided in the evaluation report for some of the projects in the Early Interventions Programme as outlined below. These are significantly less than the costs of custody and care for children who ultimately go on to display extremely challenging behaviour or commit offences.

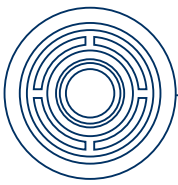
4.24 At the lower end of the spectrum a

Table 2: Costs of the Early Intervention Programme per child or young person

Provider	Project	Cost per child/young person
Action for Children	Northern Area Early Intervention Project	£5,204 (2009/10)
Extern	Strength 2 Strength	£3,642 (2009/10 South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust area) £3,771 (2009/10 Western Health & Social Care Trust area)
NIACRO	Child and Parent Support	£5,292 (2009/10 Belfast Health & Social Care Trust area) £6,891 (2009/10 Southern Health & Social Care Trust area)

⁴⁶ Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (2011). *An announced inspection of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre*. Belfast: CJI.

⁴⁷ Independent Research Solutions (2011). *Evaluation of the Early Intervention Programme for the Prevention of Offending 2008-2011*. Belfast: Health and Social Care Board.



report by the former Department of Children, Schools and Families in England and Wales⁴⁸ reported that *'The cumulative cost to public services of children with troubled behaviour is ten times that for other children. The mean extra cost is more than £15,000 a year, of which families themselves bear a third (mainly through reduced earnings); education services bear a third; health services and the benefit system each bear 15% and social services bear 6%'*. Even at this more conservative figure of £15,000 it can be seen that early intervention provides a more cost-effective option should the child or young person's behaviour continue to worsen unabated.

- 4.25 Inevitably however, this value for money can only be fully demonstrated if early intervention projects have been shown to result in long-term effectiveness. It will only be cost-effective if young people are diverted away from offending behaviour and families able to cope better in times of difficulty.

Benchmarking

- 4.26 To date there had not been benchmarking undertaken for the Early Intervention Programme. This was something that the YJA Early Intervention Manager had intended to do but now looked unlikely due to the post ending. It was suggested that this would be something the Strategic Partnership would look at. Some providers of the early intervention projects (for example Action for Children, Barnardo's) were part of UK-wide organisations and therefore could draw from good practice in other parts of the UK. Some interventions in

the UK and in Northern Ireland, such as the Family Nurse Partnership Programme and Roots of Empathy had been drawn from evidence-based international practice in the US and Canada.

Conclusions

- 4.27 The measurement of outcomes is undoubtedly challenging, potentially time consuming and needs to take place over a longer timeframe than has been achieved to date. However without such critical information decisions around the sustainability of such projects and the funding for them are difficult and potentially inaccurate, based on predicted outcomes or worse still 'gut instinct' or personal relationships.
- 4.28 As the reports by Graham Allen MP reiterate several times, a failure to properly evaluate early interventions projects at both the short-term and long-term stages will result in a persistent lack of confidence in the early interventions approach. This will lead to policy makers continuing to support short-term interventions in reaction to issues, when problems are already entrenched in individuals, families and communities.

⁴⁸ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) as quoted in Independent Research Solutions (2011). *Evaluation of the Early Intervention Programme for the Prevention of Offending 2008-2011*. Belfast: Health and Social Care Board.

Section



Appendices



Appendix 1: Methodology

Desktop research and development of inspection Terms of Reference and question areas

Research literature and guidance documentation was reviewed in relation to early youth interventions. Relevant documents included:

- the recent reports by Graham Allen MP: *Early interventions: The next steps, an independent report to Her Majesty's Government* and *Early interventions: Smart investment, massive savings, the second independent report to Her Majesty's Government*;
- research on early interventions projects in the UK;
- the OFMDFM Children and Young People's 10-year Strategy;
- the evaluation of the Early Intervention for the Prevention of Offending Programme by Independent Research Solutions; and
- research into crime prevention and youth intervention (for example by The Howard League, Ministry of Justice, C4EO etc.).

Document review

A review was conducted of documentation and data provided by the agencies and service providers in relation to early intervention work, the development of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, strategy documents and corporate and business plans.

Fieldwork

The questions used during the fieldwork for this inspection were developed in line with the CJI Inspection Framework in the areas of Strategy and Governance, Delivery and Outcomes (or Projected Outcomes). Specific interview questions were developed for the focus groups with young people.

One-to-one and focus groups interviews were conducted with a range of personnel within the relevant agencies. Interviews were also conducted with stakeholders who had an interest in early interventions and service providers and focus groups were conducted with young people.

Representatives from the following areas were interviewed during the fieldwork:

Probation Board for Northern Ireland:

- Assistant Director.

PSNI:

- Citizenship and Safety Education Officers;
- Community Safety Branch;
- Neighbourhood Policing Officers;
- Public Protection Policy;
- Response officers;
- Schools Education Liaison Officer; and
- Youth Diversion Officers.



Youth Justice Agency:

- Chief Executive;
- Early Intervention Manager; and
- (Acting) Director (Community Services).

Stakeholders:

- Action for Children Manager and Early Intervention/Choices project workers;
- An Múna Tober;
- Barnardo's;
- Extern Director and Pathways/Early Intervention (x2) project workers;
- Department of Justice;
- Include Youth;
- NIACRO Director and Child and Parent Support project workers;
- Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People;
- Northern Ireland Policing Board;
- Northern Ireland Prison Service;
- Health and Social Care Board;
- Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister;
- Office of Social Services;
- Prince's Trust;
- Prison! Me! No Way! volunteers;
- Public Health Agency;
- Researcher in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast;
- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust Children's Services; and
- The Dry Arch Centre, Limavady.

In addition five focus groups were held with young people. Participation Network assisted in identifying appropriate young people's projects which were contacted to seek their help with the inspection. Access to young people was facilitated with support from youth workers from:

- Integrated Services for Children and Young People;
- Youth Action Northern Ireland; and
- The Terry Enright Foundation.

The young people spoken to ranged in age from 14 to 16, including male and female young people. The areas where the young people lived included South Armagh, West Belfast and North Down.

Snapshot-based study on the backgrounds of young people detained in the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre

Background

Inspectors requested a study be carried out by the YJA Statistics and Research Branch in relation to the backgrounds of young people detained in the Juvenile Justice Centre. The information was gathered to provide contextual information to the forthcoming CJI report on early youth interventions, and in particular, to supplement UK research with some data from Northern Ireland.





CJI were interested in developing background information on young people in custody in Northern Ireland in a number of areas:

- social services history of involvement;
- family background and living arrangements;
- health issues;
- educational issues; and
- criminal justice issues.

Methodology

The Juvenile Justice Centre population snapshots for 1 April and 1 September 2011 were selected for the analysis. In total this yielded a sample of 50 young people, 38 who were on remand, and 12 on sentence. The level of information required for young people detained in Hydebank Young Offenders Centre was not available to YJA Statistics Branch, thus this study looks only at young people detained in Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre.

Information was collected from a manual trawl of the YJA Assessment records for each young person. The information presented therefore relies primarily on the detail of completion and accuracy of the YJA Assessment records.

Data from this study is contained in Table 1 in this report.



Appendix 2: Terms of Reference

An Inspection of Early Youth Interventions

Terms of Reference

Introduction

Criminal Justice Inspection proposes to undertake a thematic inspection of arrangements for early youth interventions across the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland. Whilst undertaking this inspection CJI will be collaborating with the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI; with regard to the educational perspective of this topic) and the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA; with regard to the health and social care aspects). The collaborative nature of this inspection reflects the cross-departmental responsibility for issues pertaining to children and young people.

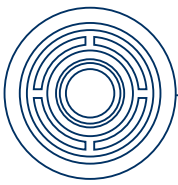
The part of the inspection in respect of criminal justice will focus on the three main elements of CJI's inspection framework as they apply to early youth interventions. The approach to youth interventions across the system will be assessed as regards Strategy and Governance; Delivery, and Outcomes (or projected outcomes). How early youth interventions in Northern Ireland align with existing good practice and relevant standards where appropriate will also be considered.

Context

The United Nations and the World Health Organisation define 'youth' as being persons between the ages of 15 and 24 and most figures for youth offending produced by the UN reflect that. However, in Northern Ireland since August 2005 youth offending has been generally applicable to persons between the age of criminal responsibility (10) and the age someone attains adult status (18). It is how early youth interventions are utilised with children and young people below the age of eighteen that will be the subject of the inspection topic. This will also encompass children below the age of criminal responsibility with whom agencies attempt to intervene prior to their potential entry to the criminal justice system or formal diversionary processes. The main justice agencies involved with this inspection will be the PSNI and the YJA but will also consider the work of the organisations who provide early intervention services on behalf of these agencies.

This inspection complements the work done by CJI in relation to Youth Diversion by looking at the work undertaken with young people prior to their entry to the formal criminal justice system or diversionary processes available. The concept of early intervention is in relation to the **prevention** of offending rather than dealing with offending itself.

Legislation in Northern Ireland provides the statutory basis for undertaking such interventions. Section 53 of the Justice (NI) Act 2002 places a statutory duty on the YJA to protect the public by preventing crime by young people. It states '*The principal aim of the youth justice system is to protect the public by preventing offending by children*'. Additionally under The Children (Northern



Ireland) Order 1995 the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable steps to stop children getting involved in crime.

During this inspection cognisance will be taken of any findings or recommendations relevant to the topic arising out of the Youth Justice Review Team's work, which is due to be reported on later in 2011.

Definition of Early Youth Intervention


Early interventions in the context of this inspection will be taken to include any of the activities of justice agencies that aim to prevent intervention by way of enhancing strengths and building upon positive attributes of young people. This firstly includes activities undertaken with broad groups of children and young people who have not yet displayed any inclination towards offending behaviour but who have been assessed to be at risk of offending and anti-social behaviour (by virtue for example of socio-economic factors). Secondly it includes work with specific children and young people who have been identified by one or more agencies (for example, social care, education or justice agencies) as engaging in difficult, problematic or anti-social behaviours which does not yet constitute criminal offending but may, without intervention, lead to offending in the future.

Aim and objectives of the inspection

The aim of the inspection is to examine and assess early youth intervention arrangements across the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland (NI).

The objectives of the inspection are to:

- Assess the strategy and governance arrangements for youth intervention across government departments overall (in conjunction with partner Inspectorates);
- Examine the effectiveness of criminal justice organisational strategies with regard to early youth intervention and how they support and link with overarching youth strategies such as the 10-Year Strategy for Children and Young people in Northern Ireland 2006-2016;
- Assess the effectiveness of early intervention arrangements in the NI system by collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative information from organisations and stakeholders;
- Examine how early youth intervention is delivered collectively by the criminal justice system and individually by organisations to meet the needs and expectations of stakeholders and customers;
- Examine and assess the outcomes of strategies and delivery mechanisms for early youth intervention against targets and expectations (where available);
- Consider the experience of groups of children and young people known to be particularly at risk of entering the criminal justice system (for example looked after children, children in care, children from the travelling community) by way of case study example; and

- 
- Examine how outcomes of early youth intervention arrangements are benchmarked against other jurisdictions and alternative approaches to early intervention.

In relation to the objectives above the inspection will focus on projects funded by/delivered in conjunction with the PSNI and/or YJA, including:

- Roots of Empathy;
- Child Intervention Panels;
- Early intervention projects involving the PSNI (for example, Youth Diversion Forums, schools education, consultation and engagement projects); and
- Early intervention projects funded through the YJA external funding panel (for example, Child and Parent Support Project; FACES: Family and Child Empowerment Services; Choices family support programme etc).

Methodology

The following methodology is proposed:

Research and review of documentation

A literature review will be conducted by CJI during March and April 2011. Each criminal justice organisation will be asked to supply CJI with all relevant documentation including reports, protocols and statistical data by the end of April. Using these submissions Inspectors will determine whether any further information should be requested from organisations. Relevant information will be shared and discussed with Inspectors in partner Inspectorates.

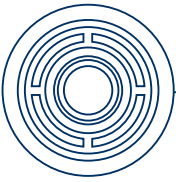
Fieldwork

Inspection fieldwork will take place in Spring 2011 with agencies and stakeholders. Fieldwork will consist of structured and semi-structured interviews with appropriate staff at various grades in criminal justice organisations and representatives of stakeholder organisations (from both criminal justice and voluntary and community organisations). Inspectors will undertake an examination of statistical information available which provides an evaluation of activities, whilst being mindful that preventative work is difficult to evaluate. Children and young people and their parents/guardian who have been involved with recent early intervention activity delivered by criminal justice agencies or commissioned by them will be consulted to gain insight into their first hand experiences and to assess the effectiveness of approaches in the view of the young people, their parents and/or carers.

Where relevant fieldwork meetings, or information from them, will be shared with Inspectors in partner Inspectorates.

Design and Planning

Preliminary research work has been carried out which has identified relevant good practice, standards and guidance for early interventions. This will be continued during the desktop research phase.



Delivery


The major stakeholders identified for this inspection are the PSNI, the Northern Ireland Policing Board, the YJA and The Children's Commissioner, as well as a wide range of voluntary sector organisations with an interest in or involved in delivery of early intervention work.

Reporting and action plan

A draft inspection report will be produced by the end of September 2011 and shared with the participating agencies for factual accuracy checking in line with existing protocols.

Publication and Closure

Following factual accuracy checking by relevant agencies and internal CJI quality assurance processes the final draft inspection report will be sent to the appropriate Minister(s) seeking approval to publish. Once permission to publish has been received from the Minister(s) a date of publication will be identified and communicated to the main agencies involved in the inspection and to the relevant Department(s). A press release will be prepared and shared with the agencies involved and with the Department(s).



Appendix 3: Extract from Graham Allen MP's report 'Early interventions: Smart investment, massive savings, the second independent report to Her Majesty's Government' on early interventions in Northern Ireland

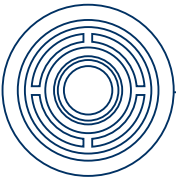
The Northern Ireland Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has a number of strategies that promote and support prevention and early intervention. At an operational level, the Public Health Agency (PHA) is convinced that investment in early years interventions brings significant benefits later in life across a range of areas such as health and well-being, education, reduced violence and crime. The PHA's approach is informed by the dynamic growth of scientific, neurological and economic knowledge which clearly demonstrates that creating the right conditions for early childhood development is likely to be more effective and less costly than addressing problems at a later age. In particular, the PHA supports prioritisation of investment in services that provide intensive support during pregnancy, the first five years of life and later childhood. Such investment will bring an important return for the individual and society as a whole.

There is close collaboration between government agencies and the voluntary and community sectors in this area.

The PHA has introduced two evidence-based early intervention programmes to Northern Ireland: Family Nurse Partnership and Roots of Empathy.


Other initiatives include:

- An increase in the current level and efficacy of the Incredible Years parenting support programme.
- Increased access for professionals and all organisations to bespoke infant mental awareness training. This includes promoting increased uptake of training such as that provided through the Solihull approach model.
- An antenatal 'care bundle' aimed at maximising interventions with parents who have risk factors.
- Active consideration through research of incentive-based smoking cessation aimed specifically at young expectant mothers.
- Enhancing links between the implementation of existing PHA Action Plans, e.g. breastfeeding, mental health and well-being, community development and so forth.
- Developing local models such as the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust parenting programme and the New Parent Project which targets intensive health visitor support at vulnerable young pregnant women.
- Department of Education support for 32 Sure Start projects located in the most deprived



areas in Northern Ireland, providing a balanced mix of services to an estimated 34,000 children and their families.

- Consideration is being given to a new strategy to increase the rates of breastfeeding.
- An updated child health promotion programme to ensure that universal services delivered to all families by maternity services, GPs, health visitors and school nurses is based on the latest evidence of what is best for children.
- Hidden Harm, which provides support for children whose carers have significant problems with alcohol and/or drugs.
- The Parenting Helpline Family Support hubs provide needs-based family support services.
- A web-based Regional Family Support Information System providing access to local information on the range of family support services available.
- Independent philanthropic funding from Atlantic Philanthropies, which has supported a number of new evidence-based early years intervention programmes both in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. There is a commitment to sharing the learning from these models and to the systematic dissemination of best practice in their implementation.



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