



15 September 2008

Dear George Garlick and Chief Constable Sean Price QPM

### **New action to prevent and tackle youth crime**

As you know, in July the Government published the Youth Crime Action Plan. The plan sets out a comprehensive package of measures to prevent and tackle youth crime through a triple-track approach of tough enforcement, non negotiable support and prevention. We want to work with you to put this major reform into practice.

At the heart of this action plan is a recognition that the factors which contribute to offending behaviour also contribute to many other poor outcomes for young people. If we tackle these we will prevent youth crime and cut re-offending, but also deliver improvements in wider outcomes for children and young people. We also know that this will only happen if there is a step change in the way all local agencies and services work together.

There are some elements of the plan that we expect to see across the country, but for areas facing the greatest challenges, we said that we would offer a more intensive package. These areas, including yours, have been selected on the basis of a ranking of deprivation, youth crime and perceptions of youth anti-social behaviour. We would like to work with you to deliver a tailored package of interventions and will provide your local authority with extra resources to support its delivery. **There is up to £700,000 available for your area over the next two years (2009-11).**

We would expect you to use this resource to implement some specific approaches detailed in the Youth Crime Action Plan. Your choice over the split of resources between the activities and how they are delivered will depend on your local needs and priorities. However, we expect each of the following to be a strong strand in your strategy:

- a) **Using child protection legislation to remove young people from the streets at night** and take them to a safe place, building on lessons from initiatives such as Operation Staysafe;
- b) **Using street-based teams of workers to tackle groups of young people involved in crime and disorder**
- c) **Tackling anti-social behaviour and disorder at school closing time by increasing after-school police patrols where needed.**

- d) **Placing Youth Offending Team workers in police custody suites** so that young offenders can be assessed and directed to appropriate services at the earliest opportunity;
- e) Making young offenders feel the consequences of their actions by **expanding YOT reparation schemes during their leisure time**, including on Friday and Saturday nights;
- f) **Developing Family Intervention Projects** to work with the most vulnerable and problematic families with children at risk of offending, with non-negotiable elements and sanctions for a failure to engage;
- g) **Implementation of the 'think family' reforms** to provide an integrated and appropriate service response to all families at risk by the end of the funding period.

Colleagues from DCSF, including the Youth Taskforce, Families Delivery Team, as well as Government Offices and the Youth Justice Board, will support you to implement these new measures, building on existing relationships. They will be talking to you and your colleagues over the next few months about how you will use this new resource. We want to ensure that it builds on your existing provision, and that it helps you to refocus your own resources to make a greater impact. Annex A sets out the key principles we believe to be effective for each of these. In areas already receiving additional support through the Tackling Knives Action Programme, we will build on existing activities and plans where appropriate, in recognition of overlaps between the risk factors involved.

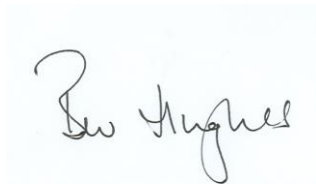
Given the high priority that the public place on tackling youth crime and the need for speedy practical action, we **are making £65,000 available to kick start activity in the current financial year**. This funding should be used particularly for action on operation staysafe, street based teams and after-school patrols. It could also be used for intensive support for families, where we want to see progress in every local authority. We want to share your learning and success in the areas identified above and support you to adapt what is working elsewhere to fit your local circumstances. **To facilitate this, we will hold a national conference in November.**

**An additional £25,000 is also available this year** to ensure that young people have access to positive activities on Fridays and Saturday nights in neighbourhoods where crime and anti-social behaviour are a particular concern. This should be co-ordinated with police activity in the local area, and young people should be at the heart of the decisions about what is delivered.

Our officials will be in touch with colleagues from your authority shortly, but if you have urgent questions, please contact Matt Collins, in the Youth Taskforce (tel: 020 7273 4931) or Gill Strachan in Families Delivery Team (tel: 07889 785831).

We hope you will want to work with us to make the most of this significant opportunity for young people and communities. If you do want to be involved, please send us a project proposal for how you plan to use the additional funding available in the current financial year by **Friday 10th October**, using the attached form.

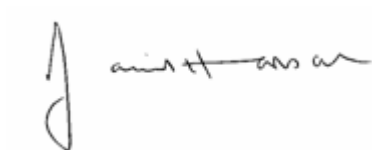
Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beverley Hughes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

**Beverley Hughes MP**, Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vernon Coaker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V'.

**Vernon Coaker MP**, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Crime Reduction.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hanson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

**David Hanson MP**, Minister of State for Justice

Cc: Director of Children's Services, Chair of CDRP, Parenting Commissioner, Youth Offending Team manager, Lead member for Children's Services

## **Annex A – what we expect to see the new resource used for**

We will talk to you and your colleagues over the autumn and winter about how you will use the new resources, depending on your existing work, but below we have highlighted the principles and approaches we believe to be effective or promising and would like to see rolled out.

We expect that over the period up to April 2011, more than half of the resource would need to go on the last two of these (f and g), given the high costs of intensive family services.

**a) Using child protection legislation to remove young people from the streets at night** and take them to a safe place, building on lessons from initiatives such as Operation Staysafe;

Operation Staysafe is a joint police and local authority operation which aims to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour in identified hotspots and to protect children that are left to wander the streets.

The operation uses section 46(1) of the Children's Act 1989 to remove children at risk of harm to a designated 'place of safety'. Use of the power is at the discretion of individual police officers and should not be used as an alternative to taken appropriate action if a young person commits a crime. Key principles of this approach are:

- Following removal to the place of safety parents or guardians are contacted to ensure the young person is returned safely to parental control, either by delivery to their homes or by parents collecting them.
- The place of safety should be located in a facility which is neutral and is convenient for parent to come to pick up young people.
- At the place of safety young people and their families should have access to information about local support and services including parenting support.
- In exceptional circumstances children and young people may be placed in emergency accommodation, or their families may become the subject of more intensive, non-negotiable interventions.

**b) Using street-based teams of workers** to tackle groups of young people involved in crime and disorder

Street based teams of youth workers help prevent young people becoming involved in crime or anti-social behaviour, working in partnership with the police.

- The teams should focus on those young people that are identified as at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour and won't engage in mainstream youth provision.
- Local crime intelligence should be used to determine the times and places for deployment and to identify local young people that are at risk of offending.
- The teams should engage with young people to identify activity that will help prevent offending behaviour and to signpost young people to existing services and facilities in the local area.
- Local authorities should ensure that appropriate positive activities are provided

alongside the work of the street based teams.

The funding can also be used to support flexible and rapid responses by the police and local authority to high profile incidents such as the deployment of mobile police stations and mobile youth provision or could be used to scope how to expand existing family support

**c) Tackling anti-social behaviour and disorder at school closing time by increasing after-school police patrols where needed.**

This presents an opportunity to tackle youth crime and disorder where and when it is most likely to occur such as transport interchanges and routes used by students from several schools. The public will see a visible police presence which will, in turn, help to boost their confidence in the measures being used to tackle youth crime.

- The precise deployment of these teams will be left to local areas to decide subject to local intelligence. In particular, this provides an opportunity to work with Safer Schools Partnerships officers to share information on the areas and individuals most at risk.
- Young people should also be engaged in how these teams are used, to help build relationships between police and young people and reduce youth victimisation.

**d) Placing Youth Offending Team workers in police custody suites** so that young offenders can be assessed and directed to appropriate services at the earliest opportunity;

This ensures a continuum of support for the young person and allows services to take quick action when a young person is arrested, to address the causes of their involvement in crime.

- Local partners would need to identify times and places where young people are most likely to be arrested, with the YOT worker aiming to:
- supplement the lead professional role, allowing a comprehensive support package for vulnerable young people to begin at the point of arrest
- kick start an assessment of the young person's needs, using the Common Assessment Framework, and ensure that parenting provision is identified as a need as early as possible

e) making young offenders feel the consequences of their actions by **expanding reparation during their leisure time**, including on Friday and Saturday nights;

Funding could be used to extend current Youth Offending Team provision of reparative and rehabilitative sessions for young offenders, possibly by paying for overtime for staff, or starting up new projects where this is practical within the timeframe.

- Proposals should have a strong reparative element and be delivered at evenings and weekends (ideally on Friday or Saturday evenings, but other times outside school hours would be acceptable).
- Projects should be innovative and actively demonstrate to the public that young offenders are receiving robust interventions that cut into their leisure time and provide some benefit to the community. For sessions occurring late in the

evening, proposals should include how provision would be adapted for this, for example explaining how young people will get home safely from sessions.

To guide future work in this area, the Youth Justice Board will develop guidance to YOTs on developing their out-of-hours reparation work with young people, including sharing best practise. This will be available by the end of November.

**f) Developing Family Intervention Projects** to work with the most vulnerable and problematic families with children at risk of offending, with non-negotiable elements and sanctions for a failure to engage;

Family Intervention Projects tackle the problems of the most chaotic and vulnerable families. The key elements are:

- A dedicated key worker works intensively with the whole family and is responsible for assessing needs, co-ordinating the delivery of services and using a combination of support and sanction to motivate the family to make changes.
- A contract is drawn up between the family and key worker which sets out the changes that are expected, support that will be provided and the consequences if changes are not made, or specified tasks are not undertaken.
- Persistence and assertiveness with families is critical to keeping them engaged and following agreed steps.

This funding offers the opportunity to test the FIP model with families experiencing multiple problems that are known to be predictors of youth offending. Local authorities might want to consider focussing projects around specific types of risk in families e.g. domestic violence, parental offending, substance misuse, poor parenting, abuse, neglect or could focus projects on particular age groups of children. A guidance note on the FIP model and how it might be expanded is to follow.

**g) Implementation of the 'think family' reforms to provide an integrated and appropriate service response to all families at risk by the end of the funding period.**

Tackling intergenerational disadvantage means looking at individual needs in the context of the whole family, so clients are seen not just as individuals but as parents or family members. Practically, this means improving local authority systems and structures to better identify and assess families at risk and join up services to meet their needs.

Fifteen DCSF led Family Pathfinders are currently testing how to deliver the think family reforms. We are keen for more local authorities to develop better systems for integrated working with vulnerable families, particularly where there are children and young people at risk of offending. This should build on early learning from the existing Family Pathfinders and include the following elements:

- Better systems for **identifying and engaging** families at risk (those with multiple and complex problems putting their children at risk of poor outcomes, including risk of offending)
- **Whole family assessment**, building on the CAF, which looks at the needs, strengths and interrelation of problems of the whole family.

- **Multi-agency teams around the family** with lead workers who case manage families and coordinate the work of other services involved with them.
- **Improved information sharing** to enable early identification and interventions. Families may have a range of complex and sensitive needs that cut across different agencies' data sharing agreements, frameworks and statutory powers.
- **Joint commissioning across adults' and children's services** for family support, possibly with pooled funding
- **Effective interventions** using a range of evidence based programmes and interventions to meet family needs.
- **Better integration between adult and children's services** at all levels of the LA – such as clear accountability for families through joined-up governance to a common vision and agreed outcomes for families across services as part of the LAA process.