

Youth Crime

Driver – Political

Related Drivers – Equality, Diversity & Human Rights, Neighbourhood Policing, Violent Crime – Gun and Gang Violence, Violent Crime – Sexual Violence, Violent Crime – Knife Crime, Collaborative Working Between Police Forces, Criminal Legislation, Prostitution, Safeguarding Children, Mobile Technology, Information Sharing, 2012 Olympics, Stop & Search

Background

In the Government's Cutting Crime Strategy 2008-2011, a key focus is improving the life chances of young people including those either offending or at risk of offending. In response to this strategy, the Government published the Youth Crime Action Plan which lays out actions needed to tackle youth crime. The Government aims through this action plan:

- To cut the number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time by preventing youth offending, with an aim to reduce the number by a fifth by 2020.
- To reduce re-offending by young people.
- To build public confidence, support victims and make children and young people safer.
- To ensure that young people in the youth justice system achieve the five The Every Child Matters outcomes to give them the best chance to turn their lives around.¹

The plan is backed by £100 million of extra funding, with some elements taking effect from autumn 2008. The plan draws on previous Government publications, such as '*Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime*'² and '*The Youth Taskforce Action Plan*'³

Key initiatives involving the police in the Youth Crime Action Plan include:

- Increase the proportion of ASBOs which are accompanied by parenting orders
- Greater number of searches on young people are to be conducted and more search equipment provided to take weapons off the street⁴
- Neighbourhood policing teams to work with community to identify young offenders and prevent their offending or anti-social behaviour from escalating
- Engage young people who are involved in crime with youth workers and ex gang members working in partnership with the police to combat negative influences
- Expand Operation Staysafe (remove children and young people from the street late at night)

- Youth Offending team workers to be based at the police station or available on call to allow for an assessment immediately after arrest
- Increase number of after school patrols and use intelligence from schools, parent and local communities to assist patrols in targeting problem areas. The Youth Taskforce will work with police, Local Authorities and schools to support the roll out of after school patrols in areas where greater police presence is needed.
- Expansion of Safer School Partnerships (SSPs) which are aimed at improving the relationships between young people and police, promote school safety and reduce risks of crime and anti-social behaviour. Every school will have a named police contact via this roll out.
- Enhancing the role of Children's Trusts which will include setting specific responsibilities for improving outcomes, in particular on the prevention of youth crime and re-offending. A duty to co-operate with Children's Trusts has been extended to schools and Sixth Form Colleges. The aim is to help early identification and referral of vulnerable young people at risk of crime.

Cutting Crime: Two years on updates the Government's 2008-2011 crime strategy. Of the seven priority areas identified, a renewed focus on young people is one. The crime reduction approach taken by the government includes taking early action to prevent crime but focusing on young people.

According to the strategy,

'Preventing crime requires intervening early in situations or with people to prevent crime from escalating, with effective use of tools and powers and by tackling the root causes of crime. This means intervening early in the lives of young people who are at risk of getting involved in crime, either as victims or offenders. And it requires looking ahead to new crime problems and taking early action to prevent them.'

This includes actions such as an increase in Individual Support Orders alongside ASBOs to ensure young people get the support to address the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour. Additionally, the recently reformed Children's Trusts bring together all services for children and young people. Each Trust should embed preventing youth crime and reoffending into their work by working with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and Youth Offending teams to coordinate services for young people at risk of offending or re-offending.⁵

Potential Skills Needs

Collaborative working skills – working effectively with colleagues within other forces and other agencies

Communication skills – to communicate with communities, young people and families

Community policing skills – to discuss and set local priorities and encourage more people to become involved in crime reduction alongside operational policing tasks

Customer service skills – delivering a consistent high quality service

Information sharing skills – to provide effective information to partner agencies

Inter-agency working skills – to work effectively with two or more governmental agencies

Multi-agency working skills – to provide strategic and local management of issues

Partnership working skills – to work effectively with other agencies to a common goal and standards

Relationship building skills – to engage with the community and young people and maintain public confidence

'Soft' skills – personal qualities and interpersonal skills necessary to effectively deal with the public

Victim and witness care skills - to treat victims and witnesses appropriately and sensitively

¹ [HM Government \(2008\) Youth Crime Action Plan. London: Home Office.](#)

² [Casey, Louise \(2008\) Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime: A review by Louise Casey. London: Cabinet Office.](#)

³ [Department for Children, Schools and Families \(2008\) Youth Taskforce Action Plan 2008. Nottingham: DCSF.](#)

⁴ This initiative is linked to knife crime and the Tackling Violence Action Plan 2008-2011 where police will be provided with 100 portable knife arches and 400 search wands and making more available over the next year to ensure this technology is available where needed across the country.

⁵ [Home Office \(2009\) Cutting Crime Two Years On: An Update to the 2008-2011 Crime Strategy. London: Home Office.](#)