



Warning: This summary is based on a quick search of a limited number of databases using a limited number of keywords (searches completed November 21st 2002) and should not be assumed to be comprehensive!

Briefing

Reducing Offending in Children and Young People: What Works?

Coverage:	Tagging, Final Warnings, Referral Orders, Scared Straight, Parenting Orders, Diversion (including Splash), YIPs and School-based interventions. Short evaluations are given of relevant papers under each heading.
Databases/search engines used:	CRD crime drugs and alcohol (Campbell), C2-SPECTR (Cochrane), Caredata, Childdata, Planex, Psychinfo, Google;
websites/reports:	The Wider Public Health Report (Cochrane), Laurence Sherman report www.preventingcrime.com , The Research Development and Statistics Directorate (RDS; Home Office), National Children's Bureau, Children's Society, Barnardos.
Searches were made on the following subjects, using appropriate keywords:	tagging, final warnings, referral orders, parenting orders, Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIPs), scared straight, diversionary programmes (including Splash). We also looked at some references which were recovered during the above searches on the subjects of school-based programmes, restorative justice, views of young people in young offenders institutions and youth offending in Europe (i.e. there was not a systematic search on these subjects).

Tagging (Electronic Monitoring EM)

Evaluation of the national roll-out of curfew orders (Walters, Home Office, 2002)
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/rdsolr1502.pdf>

This report evaluates the first 13 months of the national roll-out of curfew orders (using EM) which took place between 1/12/99 and 31/12/2000. Information on the impact on reconviction rates is not yet available but a reconviction study is planned (2004). A pilot for EM of juveniles on bail and on remand to local authority accommodation should also be reporting in early 2004. Relevant info is from interviews with Criminal Justice practitioners (CJPs) who felt the order was particularly suitable for younger offenders who often offend at night and/or in peer groups. However, curfewees under 18 were significantly more likely to have their orders revoked than older offenders (22% of orders revoked, compared to overall 82% completion rate). In Scotland Loblely & Smith (2000) also found younger offenders had the lowest completion rates. Max order length is 3 months for offenders aged 10-15. No curfews were given to under-16s during the 13 months covered. 14% of curfewees were aged 16-17. There were many positive comments about effectiveness from CJPs but UK evidence so far only anecdotal. Curfewees were found to be ill-informed about what was involved (e.g. that their phone-line would be taken over). The need for greater sharing of information between agencies was highlighted.

Most CJPs believed the orders would be most effective in combination with another community penalty. Support for this idea comes from a Canadian "rigorous evaluation" (Bonta et al., 1999) which found that *electronic monitoring alone had no effect on recidivism* but suggested tagging could support the impact of offending behaviour programmes. The UK is the only European country where stand-alone curfews are available (i.e. without an associated rehabilitative programme). There is a general lack of US research on the effect of EM on offending, but the most successful schemes seem to target low-risk offenders (Whitfield 2001).

Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising (Sherman, 1997)

Home detention with electronic monitoring for low-risk offenders doesn't reduce offending compared to standard community supervision without electronic monitoring.

Juvenile curfews: Are they an effective and constitutional means of combating juvenile violence? (Fried, 2001)

(from the abstract only) This recent US paper argues that the emerging evidence does not support the use of juvenile curfews and urges policy makers and the courts to examine the efficacy of curfew legislation.

Final warnings

Final warnings were designed to replace repeat police cautioning and are aimed at 10-17-year-olds. "Final Warning schemes aim to provide early intervention programmes to prevent reoffending and confront young people with the consequences of their behaviour". The young people have to admit their offence and are informed that any further offending will result in a charge and their being sent to court. An ASSET assessment form should be completed for each young person. In practice Final Warnings are often not accompanied by an intervention programme and an ASSET is not always completed.

There is no evaluation yet of final warnings, although there is **A one year reconviction study of final warnings (Hick & Celnick, 2001)** Home Office report (web only; <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/onlinepubs1.html>) University of Sheffield.

This early reconviction study (of the pilot) states that the Final Warning group (n = 856) had statistically significant improvements in outcomes compared to a comparison caution group. As this comparison group was in fact not comparable to the final warnings group the authors attempt to control for the differences statistically and use actual compared to expected reconviction rates as their outcome. The study says that 30% of those with Final Warnings had further proceedings compared to an expected rate of 36%. The authors also add that the usual follow-up period for this type of study would be two years and that some studies have shown that promising early results are eroded over time.

There was no statistically significant difference in the further criminal proceedings rate between those identified by Yots as appropriate for behavioural change programmes, those identified as not appropriate (usually because the young person was considered to be at very low risk of reoffending) and those not seen by the Yot (low n for this last group). The authors say this calls into question the worth of the assessment procedure and the interventions offered by the Yot. However, this does not seem a valid conclusion given that the non-intervention group was assessed as lower risk. Additionally: the study took place before the general use of ASSET, which may have improved assessment; the authors had to deal with data of very variable quality; the study comes from early in the life of the Yots and multi-agency working, when they were receiving minimal policy advice and support. The risk factors identified by Yots proved to be important in predicting future offending. Education is highlighted as of particular importance.

The Youth Justice Board publications, **The Preliminary Report on the Operation of the New Youth Justice System (November 2001)** and **Youth Justice Board Review, Building on Success (2001/2002)** include their impressions of the success of Final Warnings. These do not constitute a useful evaluation but some points are worth noting: Peak age for receiving a Final Warning is 15. According to the report, only about 65% of Final Warnings had an intervention programme attached. Yots have been set a target of getting this to 80% and the need for close cooperation between Yots and police is stressed. Involvement of Yots in assessment, use of

restorative conferencing and having an associated intervention programme contribute to success (suggests the report). Examples of interventions associated with final warnings include: restorative conferencing (with the victim), help with careers, anger management, life skills, peer pressure, offending behaviour, victim empathy, fire education, mental health and mentoring.

Validity and Reliability of ASSET: interim report to the Youth Justice Board (Roberts et al., March 2001)

This independent study from the University of Oxfordshire examines the use of ASSET forms and reports on practitioners' experiences of using the forms. The study found that the forms were used differently in the 40 different Yots questioned. There was a general feeling that they were too detailed for use at the Final Warning stage, too time-consuming and possibly too intrusive and many teams were using a shortened version. The most positive feedback was about the 'What do YOU think?' self-assessment form with practitioners saying it was informative and also a useful way of engaging a young person in discussion.

Referral orders

Referral orders are compulsory for 10-17-year-olds pleading guilty and convicted for the first time. The offender is referred to a youth offender panel (YOP), consisting of one Yot member and at least two community panel members. The intervention is based on principles of restorative justice (restoration, reintegration and responsibility (Home Office, 1997:31-2)) and the victim and other parties may also be invited to attend panels. The panel aims to agree a 'contract' with the young offender to address his/her offending behaviour and to make a reparation.

Home Office. The introduction of Referral Orders into the Youth Justice System: final report. (Newburn et al, March 2002), Home Office.

This report discusses an 18-month evaluation of referral order pilots in 11 areas in England and Wales taking place between March 2000 and August 2001. Two interim reports were previously published and the findings have effected the development of referral order good practice during the period of the evaluation. This is primarily a process evaluation. National roll-out was to begin in April 2002.

Magistrates are concerned that referral orders are used for relatively minor offences that might be better dealt with in other ways. 84% of young offenders felt they were treated with respect and 86% that the panel members treated them fairly. More than 2/3 said they had a clearer idea of how people had been affected by their offence after attending the panel meeting. 3/4 said their contract was useful and 78% agreed it had helped them keep out of trouble. It is suggested that the government should possibly have waited for the final pilot evaluation before the national roll-out.

Referral orders: A new compulsory sentence: Childright, v. 185, p. 5-7, 2002.

This article reports on the HO pilot: Yot managers had problems attracting people to referral order posts; training was insufficient (often none); Referral Order managers report *great difficulty in finding and supervising suitable reparation activities*; letters of apology were not forwarded to victims, despite offenders believing that they would be, some taking much trouble about their letter. There was 74% completion rate (where a panel had met), most of those not completing had reoffended.

An Exploratory Evaluation of Restorative Justice Schemes (Miers et al, 2001 Home Office)

As restorative justice is a principal component of Referral Orders, this is included here. This fifteen month study was commissioned by the Crime Reduction Programme, looking at seven restorative justice schemes within the UK, two for adult offenders and five for young offenders. Seven further schemes were visited and fieldwork was undertaken at these sites. The aims of the study were to judge the efficacy of different schemes, what their involved costs were for time and expenses, and how restorative justice may be used in a mainstream system. As well as examining data from the schemes, reoffending rates were considered and interviews were undertaken with 27 staff members, 23 victims and 43 offenders.

Main findings of this limited study were: offenders found it useful to meet victims, even though very few actually did meet; all schemes had very different ideas of what restorative justice was; much time and effort was involved, sometimes with positive results, sometimes not; most offenders found meeting victims very difficult.

Scared Straight

"Scared Straight" and other juvenile awareness programs for preventing juvenile delinquency (Petrosino et al., 2002) Cochrane Review: Cochrane Library.

This systematic review evaluates studies where there was random or quasi-random assignment to receiving the treatment or not. The treatments involved visits to prisons by children or young people at risk of offending. 9 trials were eligible. They were carried out in 8 different jurisdictions and at various times in a 25-year period. Outcomes measured were immediate post-treatment effects and the proportion of each group re-offending. The results showed that the intervention was more harmful than doing nothing. Those receiving the intervention were more likely to reoffend than those receiving no intervention. Unfortunately, although many theories have been put forward as to why this should be the case, data available in the existing studies was not sufficient to evaluate the theories. The studies examined were generally of poor quality, and, although the evidence of a negative effect is fairly compelling, it remains possible that the result is due to bias, for example, poor randomisation may have led to those in the treatment groups being at greater risk of reoffending than those in the control groups. Additionally follow-up was usually quite short-term, e.g. 6 months after the intervention.

Parenting orders

From: BBC News, Education, March 27th 2002

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/1892556.stm>

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, councils can apply for parenting orders to be imposed if a child has committed a criminal offence or has been truanting or has been seriously anti-social on the streets. They have been available nationally since 1 June 2000, following a pilot. Parents can be fined up to £1,000, ordered to get training or guidance, to make sure their child attends a course, or to make sure their child avoids contact with a gang. Ultimately, parents could face a prison sentence. An order can last up to a year. On 27 March the government announced plans to extend these orders to children who consistently behave badly in school and possibly to parents if they behave badly on school premises. According to the Department for Education and Skills, only 219 parenting orders have been imposed for truancy since they were introduced.

Parenting interventions and parenting orders

As parenting orders involve compulsory participation in parenting programmes research on parenting programmes is highly relevant. It is important to say that most RCTs on parenting programmes incorporated voluntary participation.

Parenting programmes have been shown to work well for reducing behavioural difficulties in children aged 3-10 (Barlow 1999). It has not worked well in reducing conduct disorder in adolescent (Fonagy, 2002) and it seems to be the case that more in-depth programmes are needed for this group. According to Fonagy (2002) the most promising approaches have been Functional Family Therapy (FFT) and Multisystemic Therapy (MT). MT has been shown to work in a range of RCTs conducted in the States, but a recent RCT carried out in Canada did not support these findings and showed no difference in the MT group compared with the control. MT is a highly specialised approach requiring long-term training of practitioners. It is unlikely that it can be incorporated in any Children's Fund initiative and is therefore omitted from this briefing. FFT has shown promising results and emphasises how family work to reduce adolescent offending might require different approaches to those used with younger children with behavioural difficulties.

FFT (extracted from Fonagy 2002): Theory: Adolescent problem behaviour is serving a function (regulation of support, intimacy, distance between family members). Treatment therefore focuses on interactional aspects of the family processes and cognitive and behavioural dysfunctions. Treatment: Consists of several components: identification of blaming attributions in families. Behavioural, cognitive and emotional expectations and inappropriate attributions in need of change are addressed mainly using cognitive methods. For example, negative labels addressed to specific family members are re-framed in a positive light. The cognitive aspects of therapy are followed by behavioural

components; communications skills training, behavioural contracting and contingency management. Focus is placed on family communication patterns as observed in the consulting room. In a review, Fonagy (2002) concludes from a number of controlled studies between 1977 and 1995 that FFT appears to have clinically significant and lasting effects on recidivism.

Positive Parenting: The National Evaluation of the Youth Justice Board's Parenting Programme (Ghate et al., 2002, YJB)

No evaluation of Parenting Orders was found, but this report evaluates the YJB's parenting programme. The report does not provide evidence of the effectiveness of parenting orders, but does provide promising evidence for some aspects of the YJB Parenting Programmes. The attendance rates are promising, as are parents' self report and youth offending rates, although, as the report acknowledges, the relationship between participation in the programme and recidivism rates is not clear.

With the establishment of Parenting Orders YOT teams have been given responsibility for providing or identifying suitable services for these parents, as well as other parents who are not in receipt of an Order but who may benefit from preventive intervention. In support of this, 42 new parenting projects were set up by YOTs in partnership with other local agencies. 35 of these were part of the evaluation running from June 1999 to December 2001.

By the end of the evaluation period, over 4,000 parents and carers had been referred to the Programme, and of these, nearly 3,000 actually started a Parenting Programme project. 66% of initial referrals were voluntary, 16% were referred by Parenting Order. Information was missing for the other 18%. Most of the parents who attended the services were white British (96%) and most were female (81%). Half were lone parents (49%). Parents reported very high levels of need; problems with debt, housing, health and personal relationships. Over eight in ten said they particularly wanted help in managing the difficult behaviour of their child. Attendance rates were high and each parent attended an average of 6.4 sessions.

Parent self-report by the end of the projects was positive. Statistically significant positive changes were reported in parenting skills and competencies. Though some parents had mixed expectations at the outset of what the Programme would be like (and parents on Parenting Orders were especially likely to feel negative), 'exit' ratings at the end of the Programme were very positive. Only 6% were negative or indifferent about whether the Programme had been helpful, and over nine in ten would recommend it to other parents in their situation. There was no difference in the level of benefit reported by parents who were referred voluntarily as opposed to being referred via a Parenting Order (the report does not say whether there was a difference in drop-out rates between voluntarily referred parents and those on parenting orders).

The parenting programmes did not change young people's perception of their relationship with their parents. Young people's self-report on their offending did not change after the parenting programme. Official offending rates were compared before and after parental participation in the parenting programme. At the start 95% had committed an offence in the year before their parents took part with an average of 4.4 recorded offences. A year later the average recorded offences per young person had fallen to 2.1.

Diversions Approaches

Crime Reduction Research Series Paper 12 'Summer Splash Schemes 2000: Findings from six case studies' (Loxley et al., 2000)

The summer Splash schemes were introduced as an initiative to give young people aged 13-17 something to do during summer holidays. Summer is traditionally considered a time of increased youth offending and the purpose of Splash was to reduce this offending in areas concerned. The age group 13-17 was chosen because 80% of the crime committed by young people is by those aged 14-16 years old and the average age for starting offending is 13.5 for boys and 14 for girls (Splash 2001).

The evaluation is based principally on statistics from 3 areas where the scheme was implemented on reports from practitioners, partner agencies and residents in 6 of the target areas, but mostly.

Main findings:

- Only 16% of the young people attending were known to be involved with crime (this is important because the schemes' aim was to reduce crime over the summer)
- Splash 2000 was introduced in the summer on the presumption that crime increases over school holidays. However, the monthly recorded crime rates over the year preceding Splash showed that crime in the three areas did not increase over the summer. This does not mean that the schemes are not worthwhile doing, but that the original idea for the scheme was based on assumption and not fact.
- Youth-related crime figures are presented for 3 of the 6 areas (other three not available). The table shows the average number of incidents per weekday in the three areas comparing August 2000 with August 1999 and 1998. Of the three areas for which they had figures on youth-related crime, Splash had no effect on crime incidents in 2 areas, and crime actually increased in one of these. In the area where there was a decline in crime, all crime fell over the period and the proportion of youth related crime did not fall. (one concern also is that the classification of youth related crime varied between areas, for example arson was not included in one of the areas neither were complaints)

The evaluation did not ask the young people or their families what they thought of the scheme. The evaluation is strong on pointing out areas where the scheme organisers met challenges, particularly in terms of targeting young people involved with crime, the practical day-to-day running of the schemes and issues in delivery. This evaluation is thorough and, as far as it can be with limited data, detailed in terms of the real impact of Splash schemes on youth related crime levels.

Splash 2001 Final Report by Splash National Support Team (2001)

In the introduction to the report the authors say 'following the success of Summer Splash 2000...', which, in view of the report outlined above, raises initial suspicions. In 2001 the YJB increased the number of Splash schemes from 100 to 150. The Splash schemes 2001 were more cost effective than in 2000 and more young people attended. 70% of the young people attending were in the target group 13-17, but it does not say what proportion of the attending young people were known to be offenders. The fact that more young people attended might therefore be the result of broader marketing rather than more young offenders coming in. The report includes quotes from young people and their families, but does not say how many young people provided feedback nor how much of it was negative (all quotes are positive).

In terms of real impact on crime the authors report % change between 2000 and 2001 on six categories (less than the 2000 evaluation, which reported on all juvenile crimes recorded) for all schemes running in 2001:

- Motor crime fell by 11%
- Juvenile nuisance fell by 17%
- Drug offences fell by 25%
- Burglary increased by 4%
- Robbery increased by 16%
- Criminal damage increased by 4%

These figures were compared with changes over the same period in 'High crime areas', defined in the report as areas that accounted for more than 50% of the recorded crime in April to September 2000 and 2001. The High Crime Areas fared worse on the three outcomes for which data was available. However, we do not know anything about the crime levels in Splash areas before 2000 (i.e. whether they are comparable to High Crime areas). We also do not know how many of the Splash areas provided crime data. The report does not pay attention to any factors other than the introduction of Splash schemes and crime figures so we do not know whether crime fell overall, if the police introduced special target operations etc.

Conclusion

On the basis of these two reports it could not be said that Splash schemes have been shown to reduce offending in areas where it is introduced. The findings from the 2001 report are promising, but not enough detail is provided to trust the figures. We also do not know whether these figures were sustained after the summer when Splash is no longer in place. Of particular concern is the finding from 2000 that youth related crime actually increased in one of the areas whilst non-youth related crimes fell in the same period.

Having said that, it might be that Splash is greatly valued by a large number of the young people involved, that the parents like it and that the neighbourhood also benefits from it in ways other than reduction in crime. The 2001 report supports this, but because it does not provide figures on respondents, nor quote any less than very positive findings, the impression is that a certain bias undermines the findings of the report. Ideally, a similar report as that from 2000 would be produced on the 2001 and 2002 Splash schemes. Also, we need to know more about how the different types of youth related crime relate to each other, for instance, did a drop in vehicle crime contribute to an increase in robberies?

Sherman's review (1997) 'Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising' concludes that community based recreational after-school programmes may reduce juvenile crime in the local area where these are implemented. The recommendation is cautious and based on only one study.

'Wilderness challenge programs for delinquent youth: a meta-analysis of outcome evaluations' (Wilson & Lipsey, M., 2000)

This is a meta-analysis pooling 28 studies of wilderness programmes aiming to change the behaviour of antisocial or delinquent youth between the ages of 10-21. Only studies using a control or comparison group were included. The overall mean effect size for delinquency outcomes was 0.18, equivalent to a recidivism rate of 29% for programme participants vs 34% for comparison subjects. Programme length was not related to outcome among short-term programmes (up to 6 weeks) but extended programmes (over 10 weeks) showed smaller effects overall. The most influential programme characteristics were the intensity of the physical activities and whether the programme included a distinct therapeutic component. Programmes involving relatively intense activities or with therapeutic enhancements produced the greatest reductions in delinquent behaviour.

Youth Inclusion Programmes

Youth Inclusion Programmes Evaluation overview (Morgan Harris Burrows, September 2001, YJB http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/policy/evaluation_report.pdf)

The Youth Inclusion Programme has been set up to 'engage' the most disaffected young people in the 13 to 16 age range – those already involved in crime, as well as those at high risk of becoming involved. The programme is being implemented in 70 of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Projects are meant to focus on up to 50 young people in the area who are most disaffected and at greatest risk of offending. Participation by young people is voluntary. The projects all aim to reduce crime, arrest and truancy rates.

The evaluation reports from nine projects that have been operational for six months or more, and where seasonal effects can be fully monitored. In five of these projects crime had fallen significantly – ranging from a 32% fall in Doncaster and 14% falls in both Gateshead and Wrexham. There was one project with no change. In three there were increases in crime (no figures provided). Numerically the largest decreases in crime were for burglary, and theft and handling offences. For another five projects that were only able to provide data on a 'previous quarter' basis, the trends were more positive – with four of the five indicating decreases in crime of between 18% and 31%. Crime had risen in one area. These reductions in crime cannot unequivocally be attributed to the impact of programme interventions, nor is it possible to disaggregate their impact from that exercised by other crime reduction initiatives.

In relation to **arrest rates**: Only three projects were able to provide a full account of arrest rates for 13-16 year olds, with coverage for at least nine months. The picture is positive, with all three showing significant reductions in the number of arrests in the area: ranging from 12% to 34%. Projects have provided *individual arrest records* on those young people who comprise "the fifty". Here it has been possible to analyse the returns from 35 YIPs, which yielded a dataset of 1,252 young people, an average of 36 young people per YIP. Comparison of arrest rates before and after a young person's engagement with projects (based on standard units of analysis) reveals a 30% reduction in arrests and an 18% reduction in the number of offences for which young people have been arrested. (We do not know what this refers to in terms of time, was it measured during the project, or (how long?) after the project finished?). In relation to **truancy and exclusions**: Data from YIPs indicated that those involved in the intervention became *more likely to be truanting* from

school but *less likely to be excluded after becoming involved in the project*. Unauthorised attendance (truancy) rose by 26% after starting with projects, and authorised absences rose by 14%; there was a 33 % reduction in fixed term exclusions amongst this group.

The average project has currently managed in some way to engage 35 of the 50 targeted young people. The proportion of young people attending the projects who are in 'the fifty' category has fallen over the last nine months, and one particular concern is the decline in the number of individual-based interventions with this group. The evaluation indicates that this may partly point to projects not updating their lists of 'the fifty' regularly enough to account for new people coming into the project.

Interventions: Projects are offering a broad range of activities: Sports and physical recreational pursuits were popular, attracting 21% of all the young people. The majority of young people were involved in group, rather than individual ('one to one') interventions: there were 3.8 young people attending a group intervention per quarter for every one attending an individual intervention. There are however questions about whether there is a close match between the types of interventions being offered and their ability to address the problems that give rise to involvement in crime and disorder. For example, the benefit of team-based sports and physical recreation activities, that have attracted over a fifth of young people, remains unclear from a crime and disorder reduction perspective.

School-based interventions

Gottfredson, D., *School-Based Crime Prevention, (in Sherman, 1997).*

One problem with the organisation of the Sherman, Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising (1997) report is that because different types of interventions are discussed in different chapters there is perhaps insufficient emphasis on the importance of multimodal interventions, particularly school interventions + parenting interventions, for which there is good evidence elsewhere (e.g. see Roberts et al., 2002; Utting & Venard, 2000; Webster-Stratton, 2001. Other refs available, see Eddy, 2000). Gottfredson examined 149 studies. The following are the four styles of intervention classified as working, i.e. at least two studies of reasonable quality show the intervention **helps prevent crime or reduce risk factors for crime**, with the preponderance of all available evidence showing effectiveness.

1) **"Building school capacity to initiate and sustain innovation** through the use of school teams or other organizational development strategies reduces crime and delinquency." This type of intervention is also rated as 'promising' in tackling drug use. Of the studies quoted the D.Gottfredson, 1986, 1987 intervention involves increasing clarity of rules and consistency of rule enforcement and activities to increase students' success experiences and feelings of belonging. Outcomes were reduced delinquent behaviour, drug use and school punishments. Effect sizes were mostly between .15 and .27. Kenney and Watson 1996 reported an intervention to empower students to improve safety in schools using problem-solving techniques. Outcomes included modest improvements in some reports of victimisation and fear.

2) **Clarifying and communicating norms about behaviour** through rules, reinforcement or positive behaviour, and schoolwide initiatives (such as antibullying campaigns) reduces crime and delinquency (Mayer et al., 1983; Olweus, 1991, 1992) and substance abuse (Institute of Medicine 1994; Hansen and Graham, 1991). Several studies are discussed which report on programmes establishing and enforcing rules or communicating and reinforcing norms in other ways e.g. through campaigns. The quality of these studies is classified as reasonably rigorous and outcomes included reduced alcohol and marijuana use and less delinquency.

3) **Social competency skills curriculums**, teaching over a long period of time skills such as stress management, problem solving., self-control and emotional intelligence, reduce delinquency and substance abuse (Botvin et al. 1984; Weisberg and Caplan, 1994) or conduct problems (Greenberg et al 1995). Three main studies are reported. All show positive effects, although most quite small. The effects of a longer programme are most promising – PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies), using 60 lessons compared to approx 20.

4) **Training or coaching in thinking skills for high-risk youth** using behaviour modification techniques or rewards and punishments reduces substance abuse (Lochman et al. 1984; Bry, 1982;

Lipsey, 1992). This is also rated promising for reducing delinquency. Includes studies demonstrating the effectiveness of cognitive behavioural training. Many studies in this area are considered rigorous and demonstrate clear, positive effects on drug use and aggressive, anti-social behaviour. "Effect sizes are among the highest observed for any school-based strategy".

Some other points on alcohol and other drug education. There is a broad literature here including many meta-analyses and reviews. The Botvin (1990) review, according to Gottfredson, shows that largely *ineffective methods for reducing substance abuse* are those based on: information dissemination; fear arousal; moral appeal; and affective education (building self-esteem, responsible decision-making and interpersonal growth).

Approaches which do reduce substance use include specific skills for effectively resisting these pressures alone or in combination with broader-based life-skills training (these usually being longer). However, even these approaches only show small effects and they were not maintained without continued instruction.

General points. Gottfredson suggests that efforts to improve the effectiveness of programmes shown to work should focus on improving the level of implementation of prevention programmes, as well as specifying theories underlying school-based prevention. Research suggests that programmes using multiple interventions worked better than single intervention strategies. The recommended direction is towards multi-faceted, longer-term and broader-reaching programmes embedded in school capacity-building activities.

The following interventions were shown not to work in at least two reasonable-quality studies with the preponderance of evidence not positive:

- Counselling students, particularly in a peer-group context outcome??.
- Offering youths alternative activities such as recreation and community service activities in the absence of more potent prevention programming does not reduce substance use.
- Instructional programmes focusing on information dissemination, fear arousal, moral appeal, and affective education are ineffective for reducing substance use.

Social Skills and Problem-solving Training for Children with Early-onset Conduct Problems: Who Benefits?, Webster-Stratton et al., 2001.

Although this intervention does not take place in a school but in a clinic after school the authors recommend that it be implemented in a classroom setting and for all children rather than just those with problem behaviours as is the case here. This is partly because when children return to school they are preceded by their old reputations and their peers have not received the same training in how to react to each other.

The intervention was developed because it was found that some children were unable to benefit from parenting schemes: after parenting programmes some children's behaviour improved at home but not at school; some parents couldn't or wouldn't participate; some parents have problems carrying out the strategies. The programme aimed to train children in social skills, problem solving and anger management. This programme involved 99 children (mean age 6 years, range 4-8 years), randomly assigned to treatment or a waiting-list control group. 18 - 20 weekly group sessions were provided, various techniques were used including child-size puppets who participate as group members. Most of the improvement on the composite scores was on the observational measures of child deviance and non-compliance, with teachers also reporting that significantly more treatment children showed reduced aggression with peers compared to controls. The improvement in parent's report was non-significant compared to controls. Improvements were sustained at follow-up, however, there was no control group for comparison at follow-up.

In the authors previous work 95% of families receiving both parenting and child training programmes had shown clinically significant improvements at 1-year follow-up, significantly higher than those receiving only parent training or only child training (Webster-Stratton and Hammond, 1997, also similar to results of Pellham and Gnagy, 1999).

An elementary school-based prevention program targeting modifiable antecedents of youth delinquency and violence: Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers (LIFT) (Mark Eddy et al. 2000)

This is a randomized controlled evaluation of a prevention programme (US) intended for all elementary school children and targeting child oppositional, defiant and socially inept behaviour and parent discipline and monitoring. There are three components:

- a) classroom -based child social and problem skills training.
- b) Playground-based behaviour modification
- c) Group parent training.

Sessions took place for 1 hour twice a week for 10 weeks.

The evaluation, involving more than 600 children and their families, reports that the targeted antecedents of youth delinquency and violence were positively affected. Programme fidelity was high. Follow-up after 3 years also indicated that the programme delayed the time that participants first became involved with antisocial peers during middle school, as well as first patterned alcohol use, first marijuana use and first police arrest.

Views of young people in young offenders' institutions

"Tell them so they listen" Messages from young people in custody (Lyon et al, 2000)
Trust for the Study of Adolescence: Home Office Research Study 201

A study based on focus groups conducted with eighty four young people in young offender's institutions, focussing on the young people's lives before prison, their experiences of being in custody and their thoughts for the future. 8-10 young people, chosen to approximate a representative sample, made up each focus group. Young people were randomly selected and invited to attend by prison staff.

Efforts which the children felt could be made to reduce offending

1. discourage young children from developing offending behaviour
2. work on parents and teenagers talking with each other
3. ameliorate quality of life
4. keep children in education, even if it is not mainstream education
5. provide stability for children, even if they are of looked after status
6. reduce peer pressure
7. work against the prevalence of drug use

Youth offending in Europe

'Review of effective practice with young offenders in mainland Europe' (Buckland & Stevens, 2001) The report presents a range of examples of 'good practice' in Europe, but few of the initiatives have gone through evaluation rigorous enough to know whether they had any impact on conduct disorder or youth offending. Of most interest in this report were the figures presented on Youth offending in Europe (quoted from van Dijk & Kangaspunta, 2000).

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