

MPA Scrutiny: 'Young people and the Metropolitan Police Service'

Terms of Reference

Introduction

1. The Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA) is to carry out a scrutiny into 'Young people and the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)' to add value to the wealth of previous, current and planned work in the field of youth victimisation, criminality and policing in the capital, such as the ongoing development of the MPS Youth Strategy 2007-9.
2. These terms of reference propose a framework – why, what, where, when, how, who – for this scrutiny.

Definition

3. The MPA will, for the purposes of this scrutiny, adopt a broad and flexible interpretation of the term 'young'. There is no clear, consistent or authoritative guidance, either in legislation or in practice, as to what constitutes a 'young person'. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child covers all children and young people under the age of 18. In British law the age of criminal responsibility is 10. The Connexions service works with 13-19 year-olds in England. Positive Activities for Young People, administered by regional Government Offices, provide diversionary activities for children and young people aged 8-19 years. The Youth Justice Board (YJB) works to prevent offending and re-offending by children and young people under the age of 18. The UK Youth Parliament gives a voice to children and young people aged 11-18. Given this inconsistency, our scrutiny will consider 'young' to refer to a wide age-range, from pre-natal and neo-natal to late teens and early twenties, but we shall be careful throughout not directly to compare incomparable datasets.

Focus

4. The focus of this scrutiny will be young people and their interactions and relationships with the MPS, including the causes, effects and impacts of young people's involvement in crime as victims, witnesses and perpetrators, and the dynamics of young people's entry into and progression through criminal 'careers'.
5. The scrutiny will consider the opportunities available to the MPS further to embed itself within youth provision and youth crime prevention activities in London, and to build and maintain effective partnerships with agencies working in this field, across statutory, voluntary and private sectors. Robust, well-managed, outcome-driven, accountable partnerships, where services are delivered by those best qualified to

deliver them, can do much to support victims, witnesses, perpetrators, and the wider community.

6. Consideration will be given to any projects operating at borough and regional levels which successfully address the interaction between young people and the police service. The scrutiny will identify best practice and draw together recommendations for expansion and replication of work where appropriate, analysing what works with different groups, communities and localities.
7. Overall, the scrutiny will focus on how the MPS can best maintain a positive impact on the safety, security and lives of young people and the communities in which they live, work and play.

Themes

8. Given this focus, the scrutiny will explore the following six themes, recognising their interdependencies where relevant, and considering equality and diversity dimensions throughout:
 - *Legislation, structures and partnerships* (eg. Every Child Matters (ECM); Children's Commission; Children's Services Authorities; Children's Trusts; Local Safeguarding Children's Boards; Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs); Local Strategic Partnerships; London Community Safety Partnership; Local Area Agreements; Public Service Agreements; Youth Crime Prevention Board; criminal justice system; Safer Schools Partnerships; integrated front line delivery; information management and sharing; embedding policing within youth related provision; Youth Services; Youth Offending Teams (YOTs); etc.)
 - *Policing* (eg. strategy; policy; central direction vs local development; problem-solving; quality of contact; operations; stop and search; custody; good practice; etc.)
 - *Prevention* (eg. early intervention; diversion; cadets; citizenship; free travel and transport; Acceptable Behaviour Contracts; Anti-Social Behaviour Orders; Dispersal Orders; etc.)
 - *Participation* (eg. police engagement with young people; mainstreaming youth engagement; consultation; empowerment; capacity building; confidence; trust; satisfaction; reporting; etc.)
 - *Crime* (eg. robbery; drugs; group offending; organised violence; dangerous dogs; knives; guns; homicide; trends; etc.)
 - *Risk factors and protective factors* (eg. peer groups; domestic violence; bullying; exclusion; culture; music; television; video; computer games; internet use; boredom; being in care; fear; gangs; truancy; education; substance misuse; alcohol; gender; mental health; postcodes; pregnancy; parenting; criminogenic cycles;

poverty; immigration; objects of desire; aspiration; discipline; families; radicalisation; etc.)

Exclusions

9. This scrutiny will not focus specifically or extensively on highly specialised areas such as child trafficking and paedophilia and other such elements of the Safeguarding Children strand of the Every Child Matters agenda, which the MPA and MPS continue to address elsewhere. Likewise, issues of gun-enabled and knife-enabled crime will be addressed but are not expected to be focal points for the work, as there is already considerable work in London under way in these areas.
10. The scrutiny will not look beyond the boundaries of the Metropolitan Police District of London, except for reasons of reference and comparison.

Background

11. Relevant background information falls into five categories:
 - Victims are young, and getting younger
 - Criminals are getting younger, and their crimes are getting more serious
 - Young people are criminalised and demonised
 - MPS strategy, policy and corporacy are imperfect
 - MPS partnership working could be improved
12. *Victims are young, and getting younger:*
 - Children under the age of 16 are not interviewed as part of the annual British Crime Survey (BCS), which is combined with police statistics to provide a picture of crime and victimisation in the UK. Therefore it is difficult to say with any assurance how many young people are in fact victims of crime.
 - Evidence from various studies and research indicates that young people are unlikely to report crime. For example, in 2002, 1,064 young people from across the UK took part in a Crimestoppers Trust survey of children under the age of 16. This survey found that 51% of those who had been a victim of crime had not reported that crime to the police.
[Crimestoppers Youth Crime Survey, 2002, Crimestoppers Trust, UK]
 - A Crime Concern survey carried out in 2004 with 137 young people in Barnet found that 86% of the young people interviewed felt that young people had a negative attitude of the police. Of the 27 police officers that took part in the borough survey, the majority (61%) admitted that they had a negative attitude towards young people.
[Barnet Action 4 Youth Communication, Results and Action Committee Survey, 2004, Crime Concern, UK]

- The existing data shows a concentration of youth victimisation in the hours after school ends. The Home Office (HO) 2003 Nature of Personal Robbery study found that just over half of school-aged victims (54%) were robbed during the afternoon period between 2pm – 6pm.
[Smith, J. 2003, The Nature of Personal Robbery, Home Office Research Study 254, Development and Statistics Directorate, Home Office Research, London]
- Research indicates that children who have offended are more likely to be victims and vice versa. A 2004 University of Edinburgh study, entitled 'The links between victimisation and re-offending', found that the more often a young person is a victim, the more likely it is that he or she will become involved in criminal activity.
[Smith, D. 2004, 'The links between victimization and offending', Series in The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, number 5, Centre for law and Society, The University of Edinburgh, Scotland]
- Compared to adults, children and young people experience greater levels of violent crime victimisation. The risk of becoming a victim of violent crime is 3.4% for a British adult. The available figures for children and young people indicate that the risks are considerably higher.
[BCS, 2005/6]
- In 2004 MORI interviewed 5,402 young people aged 11-17 years. Almost half of those interviewed (49%) had been a victim of crime in the previous year.
[MORI Youth Survey 2004, Youth Justice Board for England and Wales]
- Over a third of all recorded robbery victims (38%) from April 2006 – March 2007 were under the age of 17
[MPS, April 2006 – March 2007]
- The proportion of knife-enabled crime victims who are aged 10-17 has risen over the past five years, 2002/3-2006/7, from 17% to 23%.
[MPS, May 2007]
- In 2004 the peak age for victims of Trident crime (shootings and murders in London's black communities) was 21 years. By 2006 this had decreased to 19 years, with a substantial increase in the number of individuals who are younger than this.
[MPS, May 2007]
- In 2003 there were 31 victims of Trident murders and shootings who were under the age of 20. In 2006 this had more than doubled to 79.
[MPS, May 2007]

13. *Criminals are getting younger, and their crimes are getting more serious:*

- Despite the fact that overall crime figures in London are decreasing, youth crime trends are very different. For example, they show that

for robbery, which is the overall crime category that has seen an increase between 2005-06 and 2006-07, 83% of the accused were 10-21 years old, with 33% of the accused being 10-15 years old.

[YJB, 2006-07]

- 28% of gun-enabled crime last year (April 2006 – March 2007) was committed by 10 – 17 year olds [MPA, March 2007]
- For Trident suspects charged with murder or shooting, there has been a decrease from an average age of 24 years in 2004, to 19 years in 2006, again with a substantial increase in the number of individuals who are younger than this. [MPS, May 2007]

14. *Young people are criminalised and demonised:*

- Adult views of children and young people often portray a generation out of control: 'youth...has become synonymous with street crime and anti-social behaviour' [Children Now Magazine, 2004]
- A review of 74 tabloid and broadsheet articles about young people and crime showed that young people were referred to as thugs 26 times and yobs 21 times. Other descriptors included: evil, lout, monsters, brutes, scum, menace, heartless, sick and inhuman [Shape The Debate campaign, 2002-2003]
- A MORI study carried out in August 2004 found that 71% of the 603 youth-related stories featured in a mixture of 17 tabloid, broadsheet and local newspapers were negative, 14% were positive, and 15% were neutral. [MORI study, 2004, for Young People Now magazine]
- A similar analysis carried out by MORI in August 2006 to update the previous research found that the majority (57%) of the stories that feature young people are still negative. 684 youth-related press stories in 17 tabloid, broadsheet and local newspapers were reviewed. The update also found that the positive stories had remained about the same (12%) but that there had been an increase in the neutral stories (30%). [MORI study, 2006, for Young People Now magazine]
- When talking about the causes of local anti-social behaviour problems, people largely focus on issues relating to children and young people [Kings College London national study, 2005]
- Anti-social behaviour by youths is by far the most common priority set for Safer Neighbourhoods Teams by their local ward panels: it was one of the top 5 priorities identified in 456 wards out of the total of 630 in London. Yet, anecdotally, very few Safer Neighbourhoods Teams' ward panels have any young people on them. Nor, according to recent, albeit small-scale, MPA research, do Safer Neighbourhood Teams' Key Individual Networks: 'Many sergeants interviewed stated that there was at least some under-representation on their Key Individual Networks, most notably of young people. While representatives from schools, colleges and

youth groups were often part of the Key Individual Network, there was usually little direct input from young people themselves’.

[MPS Enforcement, Prevention, Intelligence, Communication (EPIC) data, May 2007, and, ‘Beyond Visibility: Safer Neighbourhoods Teams’ use of Key Individual Networks’, August 2007, MPA]

- It is not just the media depiction of children and young people that is of concern. The trend of referring to young people as yobs and louts in speeches and press releases is also now part of MPS and Government practice: ‘New tools to tackle yobs’ (HO); ‘Fighting back against louts’ (HO); ‘Society is demanding answers and actions to deal with feral children, hoodies and yobs’ (MPS).

15. *MPS strategy, policy and corporacy are imperfect:*

- The current, outdated MPS Youth Strategy was written before the introduction of the Children’s Act 2004 and therefore does not take into account the ECM agenda.
- The new MPS Youth Strategy, which is to be published in November 2007, firmly embeds the ECM agenda within each of its five strands. However, for it to be successful, the MPS will need to demonstrate how work with children and young people will be mainstreamed across all MPS units and activities and not remain the sole responsibility of Safer Neighbourhoods Officers.
- The division of labour and cross-working between MPS business groups on youth crime is unclear.
- There is a wealth of intervention and prevention work which the MPS is either directly involved in or which it resources at a regional, borough or ward level. However, there is a lack of centrally collated information on these activities and no clear picture of how these MPS led and funded activities positively impact on crime and anti-social behaviour.

16. *MPS partnership working could be improved:*

- The MPS has no consistent method of disseminating information on developing MPS youth policy to CDRPs and other relevant partnerships.
- There is a need to review the current MPS resource allocation to YOTs, and these teams’ success or otherwise in preventing youth crime. Again there is a need to collate centrally learning from YOTs in order to disseminate good practice.
- There is a need to create a greater synergy between Safer Neighbourhoods, Safer Schools Partnerships and other youth provisions which focus on prevention and intervention activities.
- There is concern that some of the MPS’s interfaces with partner agencies in this field are not fit for purpose.

Objectives

17. The MPA aims, through this short and intensive scrutiny, focusing particularly on direct engagement and consultation of young people themselves, to add significant value to the work of the MPS and partners regarding young people by:
- Identifying ways to reduce young people's involvement in crime as victims, witnesses and perpetrators
 - Identifying ways to halt the decline in age of young victims of crime
 - Identifying ways to halt the decline in age of young perpetrators of crime
 - Identifying ways to address the criminalisation and demonisation of young people
 - Identifying ways to improve MPS strategy, policy and corporacy with regard to young people
 - Identifying ways to improve the MPS's involvement in partnership work concerned with young people
 - Identifying and disseminating good practice in MPS youth engagement

Approach

18. The most fundamental component of this scrutiny will be engagement with and participation by young people themselves in the scrutiny process.
19. In the light of this, the scrutiny's methodology will include:
- Literature review (**Annex 1** provides initial non-exhaustive reading lists)
 - Identification and mapping of organisations' roles and responsibilities
 - Statistical research and analysis
 - Consultation with police
 - Consultation with partners
 - Focus group with youth workers
 - Consultation with young people:
 - Borough-based consultations through MPA-funded Community Engagement Groups (CPCGs and equivalents), Stop and Search Community Monitoring Groups, and Independent Custody Visiting Panels
 - 1 x pan-London hearing
 - 4 x cluster hearings (in the north, south, east and west London)
 - 4 x interviewing sessions at youth facilities
 - 4 x focus groups at youth facilities
 - 1 x online and offline survey
 - Invitation of submissions in writing
 - Report writing, including recommendations

Principles

20. Principles which we shall apply in our consultative work with young

people include:

- Engage those who have previously been inadequately engaged (eg. disabled young people)
- Engage those who are disproportionately affected by these issues (eg. young victims of crime; young perpetrators of crime)
- Avoid or supplement 'the usual suspects'
- Go straight to 'the horse's mouth' (eg. young people themselves), not via proxies or surrogates
- Use peer-to-peer approaches to engagement where possible
- Engage young people in the areas where they live, work and play, and in language they understand
- Keep participants informed of the programme's progress throughout

Steering group

21. The scrutiny will be directed by a steering group. This steering group will meet monthly October 2007 – April 2008. The steering group will, amongst other roles, provide good governance for the scrutiny, hold the project team to account, offer a sounding board and act as an editorial committee.
22. Members of the steering group will be:
 - Richard Sumray (MPA Member) [Chair]
 - Cindy Butts (MPA Member)
 - Dee Doocey (MPA Member)
 - Richard Barnes (MPA Member)
 - Elizabeth Howlett (MPA Member)
 - A youth worker (to be confirmed)
 - The chair of the reference group (see below)
 - The vice-chair of the reference group (see below)
 - Rose Fitzpatrick (MPS DAC TP) as an observer and advisor

Reference group

23. The steering group will seek reality check and critical challenge from a reference group. This reference group will meet bimonthly, October 2007 – April 2008. This reference group will, amongst other roles, ensure that the scrutiny attends to all significant considerations and has a realistic methodology, provide support to the project team in identifying which young people to approach as part of the scrutiny, and how, and comment on approaches suggested by the steering group. Members of the reference group will be:
 - 1 x young Londoner [Chair]
 - 1 x young Londoner [Vice-Chair]
 - 12 x young Londoners
 - 1 x member of the steering group as an observer and advisor

Scrutiny team

24. The scrutiny will be overseen by MPA Assistant Chief Executive:
 - Siobhan Coldwell (MPA Oversight & Review Unit)
25. The scrutiny will be delivered by MPA officers:
 - Andy Hull (MPA Oversight & Review Unit)
 - Hamera Asfa Davey (MPA Oversight & Review Unit)
26. They will work with a corporate project team comprising:
 - Melissa Wagstaff (MPA Planning & Performance Unit)
 - Gemma Deadman (MPA Planning & Performance Unit)
 - Philip Powell (MPA Press & Communications Unit)
 - Sally Benton (MPA Corporate Information Unit)
 - A representative of the MPA Equality & Diversity Unit
 - A representative of the MPA Engagements & Partnerships Unit

Plan

27. MPA Co-ordination and Policing Committee agreed on 7 June 2007 that the MPA should conduct a scrutiny into the MPS and young people.
28. This scrutiny's terms of reference are to be presented to MPA Co-ordination and Policing Committee on 27 September 2007 for approval.
29. The final scrutiny report is to be presented to MPA Full Authority on 24 April 2008.
30. There will be no formal interim reports.
31. The proposed timeline for all major aspects of scrutiny activity appears on the following page:

Annex A: Initial reading lists

- Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities, July 2007, HM Treasury & Department for Children, Schools and Families
- Assessment of current approach to reducing the homicides committed by young people, January 2007, Metropolitan Police Service, London.
- Barnet Action 4 Youth Communication, Results and Action Committee Survey, 2004, Crime Concern, UK
- Wagstaff, M. 2007, Beyond Visibility: Safer Neighbourhoods Teams' use of Key Individual Networks, MPA
- Child Abuse Investigation Command (The Children Act 2004) May 2005, Series in Child Abuse Investigation Command, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Child Abuse Investigation Command (The Children Act 2004) October 2005, Series in Child Abuse Investigation Command, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Child Abuse Investigation Command – Child Migration/Trafficking Update February 2006, Series in Child Abuse Investigation Command, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- The Colour of Justice December 2006, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Consultation within the Safer Schools Programme: Implementation of Recommendation 61 January 2005, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Crimestoppers Youth Crime Survey, 2002, Crimestoppers Trust, UK
- Definition of Criminal Networks, Gangs, Gang Associates and Peer Groups July 2007, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Drugs Scrutiny Report, May 2007, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board Performance Management Information July 2006, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Equality and diversity as a function of Child Protection Operational Command Unit November 2006, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Every Child Matters March 2007, Series in Every Child Matters, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Every Child Matters implementation update May 2007, Series in Every Child Matters, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Gun and Knife enabled crime in London April 2007, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Gun Crime Scrutiny February 2004, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- The hidden victims of crime? BBC News UK, 4th July 2007
- 'Knife Crime': Ineffective reactions to a distracting problem? A review of evidence and police August 2006, The Center for Crime and Justice Studies, Kings College London.
- Smith, D. 2004, 'The links between victimization and offending', Series in The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, number 5, Centre for law and Society, The University of Edinburgh, Scotland.
- London Youth Crime Prevention Board Summit Report May 2007, London.
- Metropolitan Police Service Results: Young people's survey March 2007, Metropolitan Police Service, London.
- MPS Response to Guns, Gangs and Knives in London May 2007, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- MORI Youth Survey 2004, Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
- Smith, J. 2003, The Nature of Personal Robbery, Home Office Research Study 254, Development and Statistics Directorate, Home Office Research, London.

- Policing in schools January 2005, Series in Policing in Schools, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Policing in schools December 2005, Series in Policing in Schools, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Report of the MPA Scrutiny on MPS Stop and Search Practice May 2004, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Scrutiny report: Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships January 2003, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Fitzgerald, M. Stockdale, J. Hale, Chris. January 2003, Young People and Street Crime: Research into young people's involvement in street crime, Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.
- Youth Consultation and engagement December 2002, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Youth Crime September 2006, Series in Youth Crime, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Youth Crime December 2006, Series in Youth Crime, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Young People and the media, Young People Now, 2006.
- Young people as victims of crime July 2006, Metropolitan Police Authority, London.
- Brooke, L. 2005, Young Victims of Crime: overlooked in crime reduction? Young Voice Matters, Surrey
- The National Youth Agency 2007, Youth Information.Com, Available at <http://www.youthinformation.com/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=90762>
- Citizens Advice Bureau 2007, Young People and the Law, Available at http://www.adviceguide.org.uk/index/your_rights/legal_system/young_people_and_the_law.htm

Annex B: List of acronyms and abbreviations

BCS	British Crime Survey
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
CPCG	Community Police Consultative Group
DAC	Deputy Assistant Commissioner
ECM	Every Child Matters
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
HO	Home Office
MPA	Metropolitan Police Authority
MPS	Metropolitan Police Service
YJB	Youth Justice Board
YOT	Youth Offending Team

11/09/07
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