

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 and 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 person'. 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 person' to refer to a wide age-range, from pre-natal and neo-natal to late teens and early twenties. We shall, however, be careful throughout not directly to compare datasets, which refer to different age groups.

Focus

4. The focus of this scrutiny will be the causes, effects and impacts of young people's involvement in crime as victims, witnesses and perpetrators and how this influences their interactions and relationships with the MPS.
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 establish, develop and 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. 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; London 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))
 - *Policing* (eg. strategy; policy; central direction vs local development; problem-solving; quality of contact; operations; training; stop and search; custody; good practice)
 - *Prevention* (eg. early intervention; diversion; cadets; citizenship; free travel and transport; Acceptable Behaviour Contracts; Anti-Social Behaviour Orders; Dispersal Orders)
 - *Participation* (eg. communication; police engagement with young people; mainstreaming youth engagement; consultation; empowerment; capacity building; perceptions; confidence; trust; satisfaction; reporting)
 - *Crime* (eg. robbery; drugs; group offending; organised violence; dangerous dogs; knives; guns; homicide; trends)
 - *Risk factors and protective factors* (eg. peer groups; domestic violence; bullying; exclusion; culture; music; television; video; computer games; internet; 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)

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 ECM 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 in public discourse
- MPS strategy, policy and corporacy could be improved
- 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, and less likely to report crime than adults. 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 Trust, 2002]
- 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.
[Crime Concern, 2004]
- The existing data shows a concentration of youth victimisation in the hours after school ends. A Home Office (HO) (2003) study found that just over half of school-aged victims (54%) were robbed during the afternoon period between 2pm – 6pm.
[Smith, J., 2003]
- Research indicates that children who have offended are more likely to be victims and vice versa. The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions (2004) 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]
- 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, 2004]
- 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 different. For example, they show that for robbery, which is the main crime category that has seen an increase between 2005-06 and 2006-07, 83% of the accused were 10-21 years old.
[YJB, 2006-07]
- In 28% of gun-enabled crimes last year (April 2006 – March 2007) the accused was 10 – 17 years old
[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 in public discourse:*

- 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, louts, 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]
- Similar analysis carried out by MORI in August 2006 to update the previous research found that again the majority (57%) of the stories that feature young people were 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'.

[Source: MPS Enforcement, Prevention, Intelligence, Communication (EPIC) data (May 2007); Wagstaff, M. (August 2007)]

- 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 could be improved:*

- 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 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 with young people themselves, to add significant value to the work of the MPS and partners with young people by:
 - Identifying ways to reduce young people's involvement in crime as victims, witnesses and perpetrators
 - Identify ways of improving the confidence of young people to report crime and engage with the police as witnesses
 - 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 of young people in public discourse
 - Identifying ways to improve MPS strategy, policy and corporacy with regard to young people
 - Identifying the resources allocated to this area of work by the MPS and undertaking an analysis of how they are utilised
 - Identifying ways to improve the MPS's involvement in partnership work with young people
 - Identifying good practice in MPS youth engagement for dissemination

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 an initial, non-exhaustive reading list)
 - 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:
 - 32 x borough-based consultations through MPA-funded Community Engagement Groups (CPCGs and equivalent), Stop and Search Community Monitoring Groups, and Independent Custody Visiting Panels
 - 1 x pan-London hearing
 - 4 x cluster hearings (in 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, prioritise areas for investigation, 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)
 - Richard Barnes (MPA Member)
 - Elizabeth Howlett (MPA Member)
 - Faith Boardman (MPA Member)
 - Camila Batmanghelidjh (Director, Kids Company)
 - 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 advisorThis group will be supported by a reference group of young people who will act as a sounding board to the panel.

Reference group

23. The steering group will seek reality check and critical challenge from a reference group. This reference group will meet monthly, October 2007 – April 2008. This reference group will, amongst other roles, ensure that the scrutiny considers all pertinent and significant issues and has a realistic methodology, provide support to the project team in identifying which young people to approach as part of the scrutiny, 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 young people and the MPS.
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. Given this tight timeframe, there will be no formal interim reports.
31. The proposed timeline for all major aspects of scrutiny activity appears on the following page:

MPA Scrutiny: 'Young people and the MPS' - Timeline

Activity: Desk based research

To be undertaken: August – September 2007

Activity: MPS internal working group meetings

To be undertaken: August 2007 – March 2008

Activity: Identify adult stakeholders to take part in interviews

To be undertaken: August – September 2007

Activity: Setting up steering group and reference group

To be undertaken – August – September 2007

Activity: Youth survey development

To be undertaken: September 2007

Activity: Adult stakeholder interviews

To be undertaken: September – December 2007

Activity: Contacting and visiting youth groups

To be undertaken: September – December 2007

Activity: Street surveys with young people

To be undertaken: October – December 2007

Activity: Planning youth consultation events

To be undertaken: October – December 2007

Activity: On line youth survey

To be undertaken: October 2007 – January 2008

Activity: Mass youth survey mail out
To be undertaken: October 2007 – January 2008

Activity: Steering group and reference group meetings
To be undertaken: October 2007 – March 2008

Activity: Draft report
To be undertaken: November 2007 – March 2008

Activity: Undertaking consultation events
To be undertaken: January – February 2008

Activity: Report Completion
To be undertaken: By 24th April 2008

Annex 1: Initial reading list

- BBC News website (4th July 2007) *The hidden victims of crime?*
- Brooke, L. (2005) *Young victims of crime: overlooked in crime reduction?* Surrey: Young Voice Matters
- Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (August 2006) *Knife Crime: Ineffective reactions to a distracting problem? A review of evidence and policy* London: Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, Kings College London.
- 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
- Crime Concern (2004) *Barnet Action 4 Youth Communication, Results and Action Committee* Survey, London: Crime Concern, UK
- Crimestoppers (2002) *Youth Crime Survey* Crimestoppers Trust, UK
- Fitzgerald, M., Stockdale, J., Hale, C. (January 2003) *Young People and Street Crime: Research into young people's involvement in street crime* Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
- HM Treasury & Department for Children, Schools and Families (July 2007) *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities* London: HM Treasury and Department for Children, Schools and Families
- Metropolitan Police Authority (6th July 2007) *Definition of Criminal Networks, Gangs, Gang Associates and Peer Groups* Briefing Paper London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (31st May 2007) *Drugs Scrutiny Report* MPA Scrutiny London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (17th May 2007) *Every Child Matters implementation update* Series in Every Child Matters Planning and Performance Committee Report 6 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (3rd May 2007) *MPS Response to Guns, Gangs and Knives in London* Coordination and Policing Committee Report 5 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (5th April 2007) *Gun and Knife enabled crime in London* Briefing Paper London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (29th March 2007) *Every Child Matters* Series in Every Child Matters Full Authority Report 6 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (December 2006) *The Colour of Justice* London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (7th December 2006) *Youth Crime* Series in Youth Crime Coordination and Policing Committee Report 6 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (16th November 2006) *Equality and diversity as a function of Child Protection Operational Command Unit* Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board Report 9 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (14th September 2006) *Youth Crime* Series in Youth Crime Planning, Performance and Review Committee Report 9 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (20th July 2006) *Young people as victims of crime* Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board Report 5 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (14th July 2006) *Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board Performance Management Information* MPA Briefing Paper London: Metropolitan Police Authority

- Metropolitan Police Authority (9th February 2006) *Child Abuse Investigation Command – Child Migration/Trafficking Update Series* in Child Abuse Investigation Command MPA Briefing Paper London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (8th December 2005) *Policing in schools Series* in Policing in Schools Planning, Performance and Review Committee Report 11 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (12th May 2005) *Child Abuse Investigation Command (The Children Act 2004) Series* in Child Abuse Investigation Command Planning, Performance and Review Committee Report 13 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (10th January 2005) *Consultation within the Safer Schools Programme: Implementation of Recommendation 61* Equal Opportunities and Diversity Board Report 10 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (19th January 2005) *Policing in schools Series* in Policing in Schools Planning, Performance and Review Committee Report 12 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (May 2004) *Report of the MPA Scrutiny on MPS Stop and Search Practice* MPA Scrutiny London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (February 2004) *Gun Crime Scrutiny* MPA Scrutiny London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (January 2003) *Scrutiny report: Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships* MPA Scrutiny London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Authority (5th December 2002) *Youth Consultation and engagement* Community Engagement Committee Report 4 London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Metropolitan Police Service (May 2007) *London Youth Crime Prevention Board Summit Report* London: Metropolitan Police Service
- Metropolitan Police Service (March 2007) *Young people’s survey* London: Metropolitan Police Service
- Metropolitan Police Service (January 2007) *Assessment of current approach to reducing the homicides committed by young people* London: Metropolitan Police Service
- MORI (2004) *MORI Youth Survey*. Youth Justice Board for England and Wales
- National Youth Agency (2007) *Youth Information.Com* Available at <http://www.youthinformation.com/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=90762>
- Smith, D. (2004) *The links between victimization and offending’* Series in The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime, Number 5 Edinburgh: Centre for Law and Society, University of Edinburgh
- Smith, J. (2003) *The nature of personal robbery* Home Office Research Study 254 London: Home Office
- Wagstaff, M. (August 2007) *Beyond Visibility: Safer Neighbourhoods Teams’ use of Key Individual Networks* London: Metropolitan Police Authority
- Young People Now (2006) *Young People and the media* London: Young People Now

Annex 2: List of acronyms

BCS	British Crime Survey
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
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

14/09/07
Andy Hull
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