

REVIEW OF YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM

RESPONSE FROM HOUSING COMMUNITY NETWORK

Q1. What is your experience of Youth Crime or Anti-Social Behaviour?

- Ans:
- Vandalism – Graffiti – Criminal Damage
 - Burglaries/Theft
 - Drugs/Alcohol/Glue – Misuse/Underage
 - Domestic Violence (Youths as Victims or Perpetrators)
 - Violent Behaviour towards agencies – P.S.N.I./N.I.F.R.S.
 - Verbal Abuse
 - Burning Bins – House
 - Seasonal Nuisance – Snowball/Fireworks/in Summer Long Evenings
 - Tormenting Elderly
 - Attacks on Churches
 - Gangs – Territorial Wars – Interface Conflict
 - Dumping of Rubbish
 - Motorcycles/Quad Bikes
 - School/House Windows Broken
 - Burnt out Cars
 - Lighting Fires
 - Noise/Loud Music
 - Boy Racers – Spinning Cars/Speeding
 - Car Crime – Stealing
 - Urinating in Public
 - Stealing from Shops
 - Targeting Ethnic Minorities
 - Tractor – Young People Driving – Rural Problem
 - Playing Football – Late at Night on Street
 - Stealing Oil
 - Petrol Bombing
 - Attacking Street Lights
 - Damage to Derelict Properties
 - Perception of Youth Crime – Groups Gathering
 - Confusion re: Youth Crime and A.S.B.

Q2. What is Your Experience in which the Authorities respond to Children and Young People involved in such activities?

- Ans:
- Over Robust – To no response
 - Not using Existing Legislation
 - Good Behaviour Contracts/A.S.B.O.'s – No Deterrent
 - Lack of Co-ordination between agencies
 - P.S.N.I. – No consistent approach or non existent
 - Intervention happening too late
 - Yellow Card System in Local School



- Red Tape
- Lack of Experience in P.S.N.I.
- Response Times Poor
- Lack of Communication
- N.I.H.E. Officers only available 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.
- N.I.H.E. Neighbourhood Officer good but are taken away for other duties
- Public don't know who is responsible for what
- Antrim Council have Community Safety Wardens which work
- Police lack resources
- Authorities seen sometimes as "Passing the Buck"
- Social Services "Hiding" behind Data Protection and Confidentiality
- Youth Justice response/communication has improved however could be better
- Courts/Magistrates are failing in their duty
- Council Neighbourhood Wardens are practical in theory but no powers
- Where Community Groups are "Authority" response is more positive
- Attitude of police wrong – should be building up relations
- Police move problem from one point to another
- Police response OK – they do come out
- Community don't know what to expect from authorities
- What is the Youth Justice Agency
- All re-active instead of pro-active

Q3. Do you consider these responses to have been effective or not?

- Ans:
- Robust Intervention can help
 - Provision of funding advice – Support can help
 - Good Communication helps between agencies
 - No – Limited resources
 - Young people moved on then return
 - No feedback
 - Youth Conferencing Working although some victims perceive them as "cop out"
 - N.I.H.E. Neighbourhood Officers act straight away in many cases – available via mobile
 - Community Groups are becoming increasingly responsible for intervention by offering diversionary initiatives.
 - Lack of Authority "follow up" is ineffective
 - Effective in some cases but parents are the problem
 - Yellow Card System not good as children are labelled very easily
 - Not really
 - Can't judge, no feedback



Q4. What Role should the Local Community Play?

- Ans:
- Could engage with young people
 - Positive initiatives to engage young people through volunteering, education programmes, social events
 - Detached Youth Work
 - Midnight Soccer
 - Community Group involve paramilitaries to remove flag and make 12th July more of a family day
 - Youth Forums
 - Scheme to promote young people carrying out odd jobs, messaging, gardening
 - Little without funding
 - Encourage and promote Intergenerational Work
 - Shouldn't be seen to be policing own area
 - Involve young people in Community Group
 - Support Parents
 - Constituted Groups should be involved in Joint Protocol
 - Citizenship Programmes
 - Arts Schemes
 - Youth Drop In
 - Shine 2 Show Road Show for boy/girl racers
 - Provide Summer Schemes
 - Engaging parents to encourage responsibility
 - Off the Street Initiative (see enclosed)
 - Street Safe Bus
 - Visit Hot Spots
 - Meet with young people and ask what they want
 - Local Communities have an important role to play in the Duty and Management of Strategies aimed at reducing Youth Offending and tackling Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Community should report incidents they see occurring
 - In many Unionist Areas issues have to be put past certain key members of the Community. This doesn't really happen in Nationalist Areas.
 - Family support programmes
 - Role of C.R.S. highlighted re: mediation also the 'Alternatives' Project

Q5. If there are problems, what could have helped to prevent them?

- Ans:
- Education Crucial
 - Joined up approach – everyone to be involved
 - Parenting – Allowing parents to deal with initial incident in their own way – making parents responsible for cost of damage, bring young person to victim to apologise and see the consequences of their action, supporting parents also.
 - Citizenship Programmes
 - More funding for Dedicated Youth Workers
 - Positively engaging young people in community
 - Early intervention
 - Rewarding young people for good work



- Diversionary trips and activities
- Police become more involved with youth e.g. visits to police station
- Relationship built with named Police Officers
- Youth Diversionary Activities
- Possible gap exists after 'Paramilitary' Groups ceases their role in Community
- More communication and dialogue
- More support for single parents
- Magistrates should have personal experience or knowledge of grassroots issues

Q6. What would help to promote a more positive relationship between young people and their Community?

- Ans:
- Promoting Cross Community Working – Drama Project carried out between 2 Interface projects
 - Intergenerational Projects
 - More recognition for young people who contribute to their community
 - Funding for Community Association
 - Funding for Detached Youth Workers
 - Encouraging Working with Schools
 - Play facilities
 - Extension of Fire Service Schemes
 - Bootcamp
 - Use of School Resources for Community Groups
 - Reminiscence Projects
 - Young people developing and running programmes
 - Citizenship Programmes in all Schools
 - Trades for Young People e.g. Plumbers, Electricians
 - Provide a Graffiti Wall
 - More Community Safety Wardens
 - Young people attend meetings – to represent the youth and hear their side

Q7. Finally, if there were 3 key issues you could ask the Youth Justice Review Team to address, what would they be?

- Support to communities by authorities
- Closer working relationship with communities
- Proper resources to prosecute
- Improve confidence in current system, particularly for victims
- Training for communities as how to reach and deal with young people involved in crime or A.S.B.
- Consistency of approach
- Promoting Parental Responsibility
- Intervention at young age
- Reduce Legislation in terms of Access NI checks
- Focus on Preventative measures as opposed to intervention



- Alcohol and Drug misuse also Legal High
- Improve resources for the sector to promote better communication and worthwhile engagement
- Access to specialist advice and expertise
- Intervention at School Level is very important
- Consistency in Policy
- Consistency in Sentencing
- More Community Service rather than lock up – must be meaningful
- Focus on the 13-15 year age group as this is when they are making choices
- Make a clear schedule of offences and sanction which offenders can expect to receive
- Junior Warden Scheme
- Better and long-term funding for Community Groups to address Youth Issues

