

# Lost in Transition

A Report of the Barrow  
Cadbury Commission on  
Young Adults and the  
Criminal Justice System



# Contents

2	Membership of the Commission
3	Foreword by Sukhvinder Stubbs, Director, Barrow Cadbury Trust
4	About the Commission on Young Adults and the Criminal Justice System
5	Introduction by Greg Parston, Chair of the Commission
6	A Life of Byron
9	Pathways to adulthood and the criminal justice system
15	1. Developing a criminal justice model for young adults in transition
25	2. Sentencing young adults on age and maturity
33	3. Policing young adults
37	4. Improving mental health care for young adults
41	5. Improving the treatment of young adults with substance and alcohol problems
45	6. Education, employment and training and young adults
51	7. Housing young adults
55	8. Health and social care for young adults
59	9. Measuring social outcomes in the criminal justice system
62	Summary of Recommendations
64	Notes
65	Annex: Organisations consulted

Further copies of the report are available from:

Barrow Cadbury Trust  
25–31 Tavistock Place  
London WC1H 9SF  
T 020 7391 9220  
F 020 7391 9229  
[www.barrowcadbury.org.uk](http://www.barrowcadbury.org.uk)

The report is also available in Welsh.

Please note that the young adults pictured in this report have been included for illustrative purposes and are not connected to any of the individuals that are quoted or referred to throughout the report.

# Membership of the Commission



## Chair of the Commission

**Greg Parston**, Executive Chair of the Office for Public Management

## Commission Members

**Sheila Adam**, Director of Public Health at North East London Strategic Health Authority

**Mark Ashford**, Taylor Nichol Solicitors

**Carol Bernard CBE**, Director of Offender Management Service, Wales

**Professor John Bynner**, Director of the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, Institute of Education, University of London

**Jane Drabble OBE**, Chair of Mental Health Media, Member of the National Learning and Skills Council and former Director of Education at the BBC

**Marc Edwards**, Director, The Young Disciples

**Una Padel OBE**, Director, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, Kings College, University of London

**Sir Charles Pollard**, Youth Justice Board, Chair of the Justice Research Consortium and former Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police

**Professor David Smith**, Professor of Criminology, Lancaster University

**Anna Southall**, Chair of the Barrow Cadbury Trust

**Professor Michael Tonry**, Marvin J. Sonosky Professor of Law and Public Policy, University of Minnesota

**Ed Williams**, Managing Director, Hanover Partnership and former Head of Corporate Social Responsibility, Marks & Spencer

## Secretary and Senior Researcher to the Commission

**Katharine Jones**, Secretary and Senior Researcher to the Commission (from November 2004)

**Barry Mussenden** Secretary to the Commission (to November 2004)

## Research and Support Team

**Dan Burn**, Researcher, Office for Public Management (to October 2004)

**Rebecca Korda**, Administrator, Barrow Cadbury Trust (to February 2005)

**Alice Murray**, Administrator and Research Assistant, Barrow Cadbury Trust (from February 2005)

**Susan Watson**, Researcher, Barrow Cadbury Trust (to February 2005)

**Sharon Wellington**, Senior Administrator, Barrow Cadbury Trust

# Foreword



I am delighted to introduce the report from the Commission on Young Adults and the Criminal Justice System. Barrow Cadbury have had a longstanding commitment to penal reform. From founding the Cropwood Fellowships at the Cambridge Institute of Criminology to supporting the All Party Penal Affairs Group and Penal Affairs Consortium, we have also developed lasting partnerships with key organisations in the sector such as the Prison Reform Trust and Nacro.

The gap in meeting the needs of young people who are making the transition to adulthood emerged as a central concern for the groups we support. In particular the criminal justice system which chooses to demarcate a young person from an adult at the arbitrary age of 18 has emerged as one of the starkest examples of where vulnerable young people are being failed. Given that almost 10 per cent of young people aged between 18 and 24 have been cautioned or arrested by the police, this is a key omission in policy. To the many communities that Barrow Cadbury supports the links between growing up in poverty and the routes into crime are clear. Critically for Barrow Cadbury and for many of our communities the over-representation of African Caribbean young men, and increasingly Muslim young men in the criminal justice system signifies the need for an overhaul of a system which so clearly puts criminal justice before social justice in the pathway to adulthood.

Forming a Commission was an appropriate way to highlight and develop innovative and workable solutions to the problems that young adults face in growing up in the criminal justice system. The report which has emerged from our distinguished group of Commissioners emphasises the devastating impact that imprisonment has on a young person's life chances and the futility of a criminal justice system that sees nearly three quarters of 18 – 20 year olds reconvicted after release from the prison system.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Commissioners for the time, effort and passion they contributed so freely and especially the Chair, Greg Parston who has consistently provided great insight and vision throughout.

Barrow Cadbury will respond to the recommendations of the Commission by reforming our funding programme in a way which promotes the improvement of life chances of young people who are caught up in the criminal justice system. New funding guidelines will be launched in spring 2006. We will also look to build up partnerships with organisations interested in building wider public support to ensure that young adults are given the support and help that they need.

**Sukhvinder Stubbs**  
**Director, Barrow Cadbury Trust**  
September 2005

# About the Commission

The independent Commission on Young Adults and the Criminal Justice System was established by the Barrow Cadbury Trust. The role of the Commission was to develop a way in which the criminal justice system can recognise the importance of the transition between adolescence and adulthood, to develop ideas about how the system can promote natural desistance from offending in young adults in transition, and to find a way in which the criminal justice system could better promote the life chances of young adults.

The Commission began its work in summer 2004. A wide range of stakeholders were invited to submit written evidence or were consulted through one-to-one or roundtable discussions about the issues facing young adults in transition and what the solutions could be. A list of organisations consulted is appended to the report. Commissioners also made a number of study visits to projects aimed at helping young adults in transition, in the UK, in Europe and in North America. The recommendations contained in the report have been informed by the consultations and the visits.

A number of partner organisations undertook a range of projects for the Commission to help develop the recommendations and the report:

- a) The Prison Reform Trust in partnership with Jane Gordon examined potential proposals for sentencing young adults in the courts;
- b) MEL Regeneration facilitated a number of focus groups with young adults across England and Wales;
- c) The Social Market Foundation examined and evaluated private sector employment schemes for young adults in custody and in the community;
- d) Crime Concern reviewed the extent of provision for young adults in the voluntary and community sector in two case study areas – the West Midlands and South West;
- e) The National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (Nacro) facilitated pilot discussion groups between community police and young adults, and hosted a roundtable discussion on the housing issues facing young adults;
- f) Dr Colin Webster, Dr Rob MacDonald, Tracey Shildrick, and Mark Simpson of Teesside University undertook a literature review on the theme of young adults, social exclusion and the extended transition to adulthood;
- g) The Office for Public Management (OPM) reviewed the current policy provisions for young adults in the criminal justice system and the causes of offending in young adults.

- h) Professor Roger Bowles and Rimawan Pradiptyo of the Centre for Criminal Justice, Economics and Psychology, University of York undertook an analysis of the cost and benefit considerations of young adults in the criminal justice system. The findings from this work will be available as a supplementary report.

Further information about the work of the Commission, and reports from some of the studies listed above, will be available at [www.barrowcadbury.org.uk](http://www.barrowcadbury.org.uk).

Thank you to all the young adults who gave up their time to tell us about their experiences, Gary Younge who helped us write about the messages from the young people, Rob Blackhurst for helping to finalise the report and Jason Wilde for the photography.

A special thanks to all the staff at Barrow Cadbury Trust for their hard work in supporting this project, and to Baroness Vivien Stern, Lord Navnit Dholakia, Lord Herman Ouseley, Paul Cavadino, Juliet Lyon, Katherine Rake and Rob Allen for their initial advice on establishing the Commission.

Thanks also to all the individuals and organisations who took the time to make submissions; and to Boston Police Department, C-FAR, Centre for Court Innovation, and Ringe Prison who hosted visits from Commissioners.

# Introduction



Young people grow up, most into civilly responsible adults, but some encounter trouble along the way. Trouble can stem from a number of factors, including social and economic deprivation and discrimination. Yet, when young people in trouble engage public services, including those of the criminal justice system, that are intended to help them develop and grow into responsible adults, they can find the experience frustrating, unhelpful and even damaging.

Part of the reason for that is that public services are not geared as well as they could be to help young people – particularly young people in trouble – make the transition to adulthood. The consequence is that many of those people get lost in transition. That is not good for them, and ultimately not good for any of us.

The Barrow Cadbury Trust's Commission on Young Adults and the Criminal Justice System has tried to address this issue directly: how can criminal justice services, and public services in general, work more effectively to help young people to lead crime-free lives and to develop into fulfilled adults? The challenges here are immense, demanding a careful balancing of individual and societal interests, of focus on criminal behaviour and the causes of criminal behaviour, of the capacities of the criminal justice system and the appropriateness of other social justice interventions. I believe that the recommendations that the Commission has fashioned can go a long way in striking those balances.

I am very pleased to have been able to participate in this work and in the learning and critical constructions that the Commission have undertaken in order to produce this report. My personal thanks go to the Commission members, each of whom put in more time, effort and commitment than they were asked to do when we started, and to the Barrow Cadbury Trust research team and staff who worked so hard to make our work seem so painless. Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank all those who work with young people in transition who shared with us their successes and failures so that we could learn more, and especially the young people themselves who contributed their own experiences and knowledge to our work.

**Greg Parston, PhD**  
**Chair of the Commission**  
September 2005

# A Life of Byron

As long as Byron has been aware, people close to him, people he loved, went away from time to time. He speaks about them as though they were on business trips or residential courses. “My uncle Delroy was away for a bit,” he says, going through family members and friends who have been in prison. “Stephen my brother went up to Leeds; Jackie spent some time in Holloway but she should be back soon if she’s not out already.” They never spoke fondly of it. But they usually came back.

In those early years Byron and Stephen would roam the estate sometimes until 11 or 12 at night. They got bored. They got into fights. They got into trouble. When he was 13 Byron threw a bicycle from the 4th floor of the estate to teach someone a lesson. The parents called the police. They came to speak to Byron’s mother who had no idea where he was. When he got home she gave him what for. It wasn’t for the first time. But it would be the last for at least a while. The next day social workers came and took Byron away, his mother hurling abuse at them as they left.

At first he enjoyed care. There were older, more daring kids there. “It was a laugh at first because there were loads of kids my age,” he says. “And we used to pretty much do what we wanted really. We smoked blow, went shoplifting, got off with girls. It was great. The staff didn’t seem to care that much. And even if they did they couldn’t hit you. They couldn’t do anything really. They’d try and talk but that was just acting hard. They never actually did anything.”

But a revolving door of foster homes and residential care with a few short breaks at his mother’s and Stephen’s soon got him down. Every time he went back to the home, there’d be new kids and he’d be an outsider. Every time he went back to his mother’s he felt like an outsider. Every time he went to a new foster home he’d think: “This time it’s going to work out,” and within a couple of weeks he’d be kicked out.

School, to Byron, felt like one more place he might go to on any given day – another venue to relieve the tedium. Nobody ever asked him about it. The few times he sat in on classes he had no clue what was going on. So long as he never said a word the teachers didn’t bother him. In fact so long as he kept quiet it didn’t seem to make a whole lot of difference whether he was there or not. The moment at which he had to stop attending was something of a blur. But it came around the same time that he found himself out of care. He was 16 and back at his mother’s mostly – bored and restless – or with his dealer. Petty theft – from shop lifting to bag snatching – had become a way of life. And a way to graduate from marijuana to ecstasy.

With no qualifications and no one he knows working, the few favours he does for his dealer turns into the closest thing he’s got to a full-time job. People come to Byron and Byron sorts them out with drugs. He started with marijuana, but graduated to anything. “I never wanted to get into crack and smack and all that because those people are crazy. I didn’t want to be around it,” he says. “But I’ve got to eat. And who’s supposed to feed me except me? How am I supposed to feed myself? The only way I know how is to rob somebody or sell a phone to somebody and then I’d have £20 in my pocket to go and buy some food for the next two days.”

After a row with one of his buyers gets violent, the police are called. This time he ends up in a Young Offender Institution for six months. It reminds him of care without the day trips. He is introduced to heavier drugs by his fellow inmates. By the time Byron comes out, he has a serious heroin habit. His mother will no longer let him stay. Nor will his former dealer. He sleeps where he can and steals what he can to keep the habit up. What was once a way of passing the time has become a way of life.

A few spells back in the Young Offender Institution achieve little. His drug habit leaves him vulnerable to abuse from wardens and inmates. The probation staff refer him to a New Deal scheme. But he can’t cope. “A couple of times I just couldn’t get it together,” he says. “I would feel I was running out of chances but no one gave a shit about my habit. It was like asking a one-legged man to run the marathon. I just couldn’t do it.”

Too old for Connexions and fired from the New Deal scheme he loses his benefit. Worried that the next visit to any institution will land him in jail he stays away from the agencies that might help, unaware that he is entitled to help under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. Byron’s 18th birthday came and went with little fanfare. With no cards and not a word from his mother in months he went out for a couple of drinks with Stephen and Jason, one of the few drug-buyers he liked. If this was a milestone, nobody told Byron. But four months later, Jason persuaded him to help him burgle a house and then make off in a stolen car.

“I know it sounds stupid but I was doing him a favour really,” says Byron. “He’s a crack head and it was the only way I was going to get my money so it made sense.” When they got caught Jason, who was driving, eventually backed this up. But it made no difference. Jason was three weeks shy of his 18th birthday. They were friends. But now the five months that separated them in age had thrown up a legal frontier between them that seemed every bit as unbreachable as the Berlin Wall had been.

# Pathways to adulthood and the criminal justice system

Jason was sorted out with a Young Offenders Team, and given drug treatment and education advice and put on probation for a year. Byron went to prison (the Young Offenders Institutions were full) for four months. Suddenly he realized he was in serious trouble. There was no stern lecture about getting back on track or concern about his future. This was his future. No one had warned him that there would be no more warnings.

“I couldn’t believe it,” he said. “They made out like I had led him astray. Like I should have known better because I was over 18. Like that makes any difference. I didn’t even know how old he was. Anyway, he’s a bloody crack head. If anyone got led astray it was me.”

Prison was tough. He was one of the youngest there and the older ones would try it on. Steal his cigarettes, make passes, make him run errands. Get him into more trouble. Only the heroin made it bearable. When he came out his habit was worse than ever. Jason, who was off crack now, felt bad and sorted him out with another friend’s couch. But Byron had nothing. Caught stealing again the courts finally addressed his habit. The magistrate says this is his last chance or he’s going back to prison. All Byron hears is that he’s not going to prison again. He is given a Drug Treatment and Testing Order. For three weeks he thinks he’s on a roll. He’s reporting for duty, and the housing officer and employment officers are talking to him as though there’s a chance of something else. Something better. “I knew that the only way for me to get off drugs was to change my lifestyle,” he says. “That means changing my friends, changing everything. I just had to keep busy to stay off them all.” But will-power on its own could not make those changes real. Not for Byron anyway. When the courses are over he goes back to the couches and the sofas of the world he knew before. Mostly he passes but every now and then he’d indulge. Just for old time’s sake.

When the test came Byron thought he might even pass. He wasn’t a junkie like his friends were. Failing surprised him. Ending up in prison, however, did not.

Criminal justice policies in England and Wales do unnecessary damage to the life chances of young adult offenders and often make them more, not less, likely to re-offend. They make it harder for young adults to lead crime-free lives and exacerbate the widespread problems of social exclusion that other government policies aspire to ameliorate. As a society, our collective interest is to have as many young adults as possible mature as fully and as early as they can with as little damage to themselves and others as possible along the way. The circumstances in young adults’ lives that diminish their life chances and make them vulnerable to social exclusion also make them more likely than others to commit crimes.

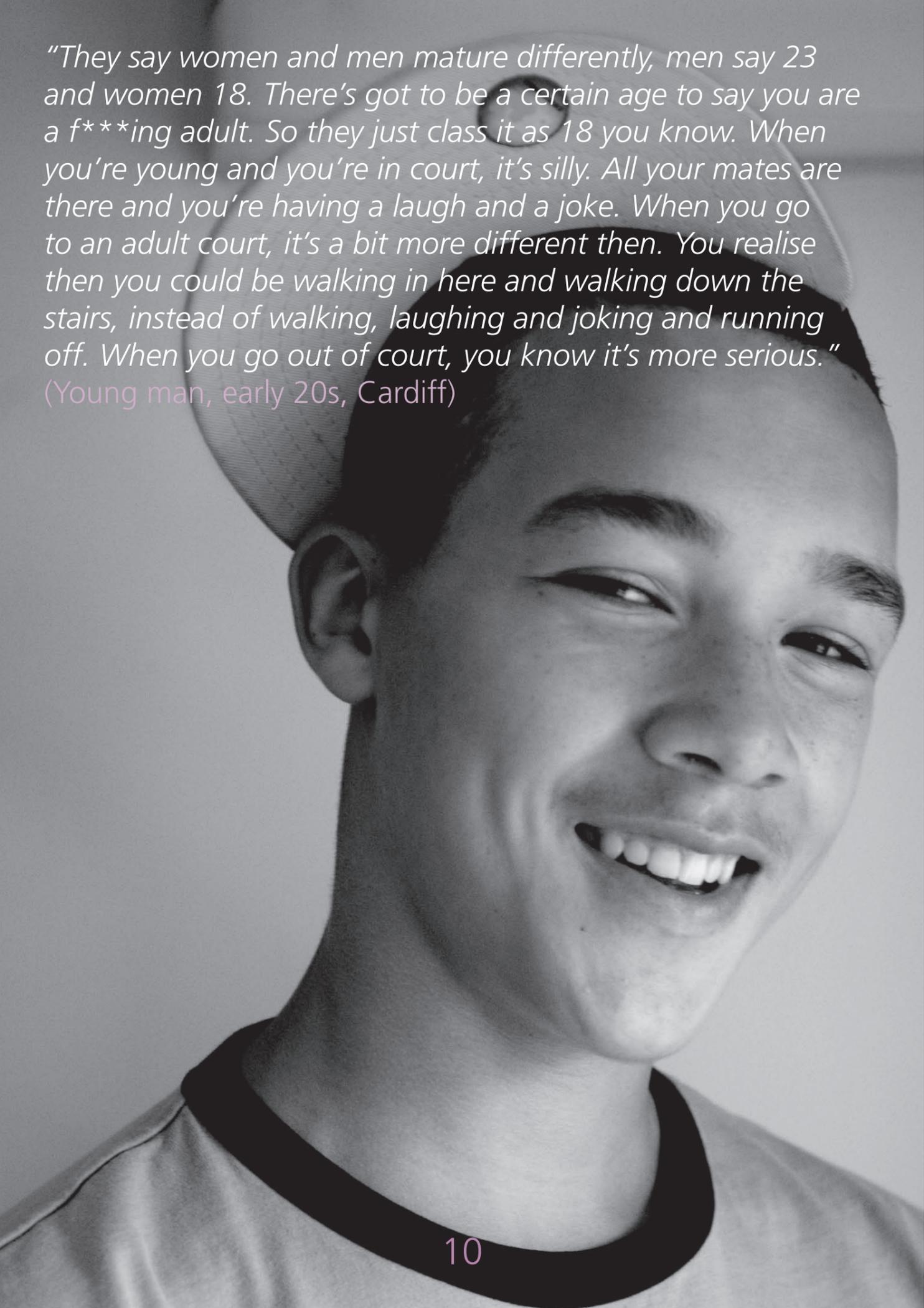
The criminal justice system loses too many young adult offenders in the transition from adolescence to adulthood. It is a period of flux when young people leave school and full-time education altogether. They may also leave the family home; those in residential care will certainly leave. The choices available for those not going into higher education – of entering full-time training or the youth labour market – have slowly disappeared. Over the past few decades, the divide in ‘life chances’ between those with and without school qualifications has hardened.<sup>1</sup> While the policy focus has been on encouraging students to stay on in full-time education beyond the compulsory school leaving age, those who leave early can drift between low-skilled, low-paid casual work and unemployment. These young people face the greatest risks associated with social exclusion. They are also those most likely to be in the criminal justice system. Decisions that young adults make about whether to stay on in education beyond the age of compulsory schooling, enter the workplace, or seek illegal thrills, have a long-term impact on the quality of their adult lives.<sup>2</sup>

Some people mature earlier than others and nearly everyone matures at different times in different stages of their lives. Physical maturity, emotional maturity, sexual maturity, social maturity, and the ability to handle drink and drugs occur at different times for different people and are provoked by different triggers. Some people, probably not very many, are ready to start careers, set up households, and generally act as responsible citizens at age 18.

Most, however, remain emotionally and socially immature, dependent on parental or state support, powerfully influenced by peers, and living experimental lives of trial and error.

The legal system, however, treats everyone 18 and over as an adult. There are few if any special programmes for young adults who may remain immature in some respects for years after their 18th birthday. As one report has said, the problems associated with youth offending do not conclude at “neat, age-specific points and therefore age-related policies... do not fit harmoniously with the realities of the extended transitions” of young adults.<sup>3</sup> There is currently no specific criminal justice regime for young adults who are over the age of majority but still developmentally young. Neither judges nor magistrates are under any obligation to take into account the age or maturity of offenders when they pass their 18th birthday.

The Government doesn’t consistently apply this belief that we become independent adults on our 18th birthday. Many programmes do aim special provision at young adults, albeit wildly inconsistently. For labour market policy, a reduced minimum wage extends up to age 21 while the New Deal for Young People is aimed at the 18 to 24 age group. Until the age of 25, welfare policy treats young people as at least partially dependent on their families by presuming that they should be paid a lower level of state benefits.



*“They say women and men mature differently, men say 23 and women 18. There’s got to be a certain age to say you are a f\*\*\*ing adult. So they just class it as 18 you know. When you’re young and you’re in court, it’s silly. All your mates are there and you’re having a laugh and a joke. When you go to an adult court, it’s a bit more different then. You realise then you could be walking in here and walking down the stairs, instead of walking, laughing and joking and running off. When you go out of court, you know it’s more serious.”*  
(Young man, early 20s, Cardiff)

The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 extends special support to young people, aged up to 21, who have been in residential care, and beyond that for those with special educational needs.

Even in the criminal justice system the Government has, at various times, promised to treat young adults as a distinct group. Labour made a manifesto commitment to improve conditions for young adults in the criminal justice system and acknowledged that 18 to 20 year olds “have many of the same characteristics as 16 to 17 year olds – immaturity, low educational attainment, poor parenting, behavioural problems, alcohol or drug problems.” In its response to the Home Affairs Committee’s recent report on the Rehabilitation of Prisoners, the Government said that young adult offenders “will benefit from the creation of a National Offender Management Service, and better case management will help in targeting the delivery of programmes and services to offenders.” In particular, the Government promised that “young offenders will be a priority group for offender management resources, and we are piloting the approach with this age group first.”

Most criminal justice policymaking towards young adults, where it exists (for example in Young Offender Institutions which cater for 18 to 20 year olds), is bounded by age. Eighteen is not an appropriate age at which to end solicitude for immature and troubled young people. The transition to adulthood is variable and dependent upon a wide range of circumstance peculiar to each young person.

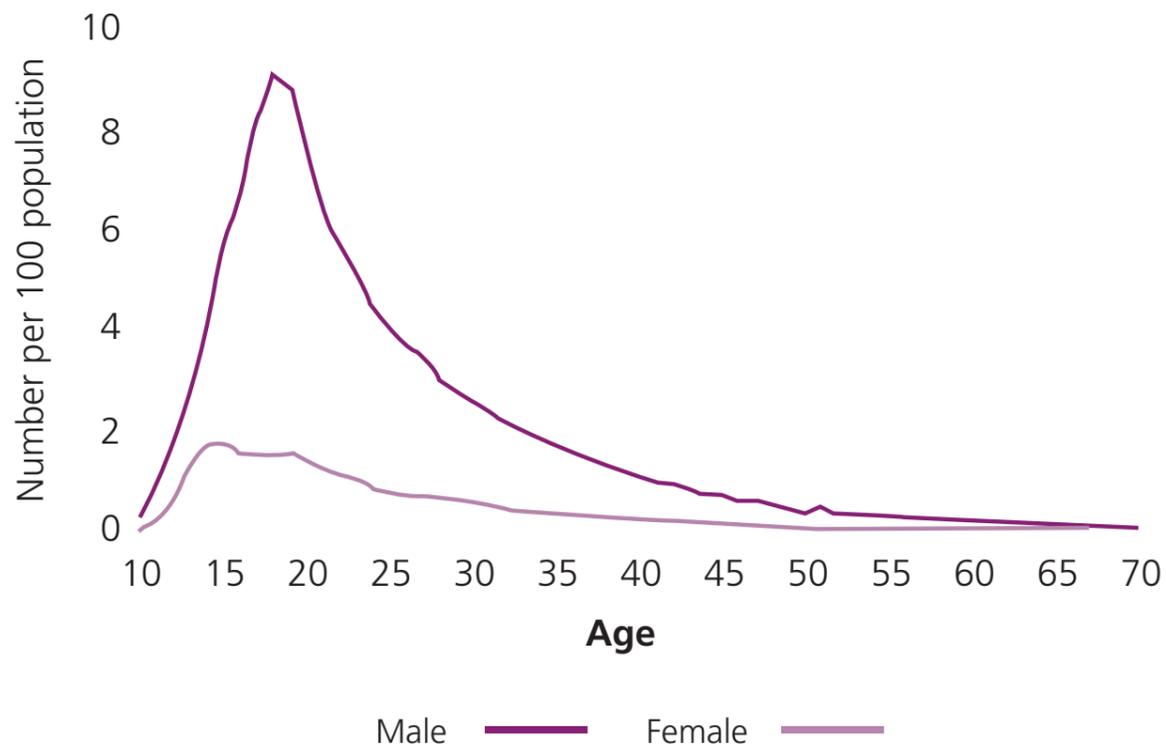
A central theme of this report is the additional barriers, disadvantages and discrimination faced by Black and minority ethnic young adults in the criminal justice system. Much of the relevant academic literature contains a highly ethnicised version of transition to adulthood.<sup>4</sup> Studies that do look at Black or minority ethnic groups growing up can often problematise them against a white majority norm. However, the transition to adulthood can vary according to ethnicity. What is most important is that young people in transition are recognised by policymakers as a group in need of assistance through that transition.

Young adults, whose lives social exclusion policies aim to improve, are disproportionately the ones whose life chances are diminished by criminal justice policies. Scholarly literature on human development refers to ‘risk factors’ because their occurrence increases the odds that someone will commit crime, abuse drugs, fail in school, and become (unplanned) teenage parents. ‘Protective factors’ are the opposite – circumstances such as being raised in a stable and loving household, attending good schools, and living in a healthy neighbourhood that are conducive to happier outcomes.

At the same time, the much tougher sentencing and punishment policies adopted for the adult criminal justice system and other recent legislation are slowing down the transition to adulthood during which most offenders naturally grow out of crime. Under current arrangements, the effort to address those factors that can result in crime largely stops when a youngster turns 18 and becomes subject to the adult criminal justice system. The adult system treats young adults as if they are fully mature and responsible for their behaviour. They are therefore treated like any other adult. Often, however, young adults are not fully mature, and treating them as if they were does more harm than good.

Failing to satisfy the demands of the adult system labels young people as uncooperative and can eventually lead to custody. Time spent in secure institutions socialises them into the criminal values of older offenders, introduces them to larger numbers of offending peers, and stigmatises them in ways that make jobs, housing, and stable boyfriends and girlfriends harder to find. Unsurprisingly, it makes young adults more likely to re-offend.

*“From the ages of 13 to 19, you’re a teenager. From the ages of 20 to 21 you’re an adolescent. You’re an adult from I’d say about 23 onwards. Then you’re going to start experiencing things, then you’re going to start thinking for yourself. I’m 23 now, I can’t keep going out every weekend robbing people’s phones. I’m 23, I’ve got to look after myself now.”*  
 (Young woman, early 20s, Birmingham)



**The 'Age - Crime' Curve:** Age of convicted or cautioned offenders by gender for indictable offences, 1998  
 (Reproduced from Home Office, RDS, A Guide to the Criminal Justice System in England and Wales)

The arbitrary line that the criminal justice and social policies draw between adolescence and childhood must be erased to make the system better at reducing re-offending and less destructive of troubled young adults' life chances. The Commission recognises that an integrated criminal justice system will be seen as a radical solution, particularly in an environment that has seen so much change and uncertainty in recent years. Yet we aspire to that as the long-term solution.

In the interim, we propose changes in practice, policy and law to establish the over-riding policy premise that young adulthood is a transitional period and that appropriate responses to young adult crime will vary with an individual's maturity and particular circumstances. These are the key elements:

- >Establish Transition to Adulthood (T2A) teams in every local criminal justice area consisting of local representatives of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), Connexions, Drug (and Alcohol) Action Teams (DATs), local authorities, and the independent and voluntary sector;
- >Require all governmental human services agencies, including those concerned with mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, education, vocational training and housing, to develop programmes targeting the needs of young adult offenders;
- >Enshrine a strong presumption in favour of diversion (by police, prosecutors, and magistrates) of young adult offenders away from the formal criminal justice system and into alternative programmes tailored to address their individual developmental needs and to diminish the individual social exclusion factors which lead to offending;
- >Enact a strong statutory presumption against the imprisonment of young adult offenders, generally reserving imprisonment only for the most serious violent offences.

Though a large proportion of people commit crimes when they are young, most desist from doing so as they mature. Offending rates peak in the middle teenage years and decline steadily until only a small percentage of offenders continue into their late 20s. Even among the most persistent, the inner fires die down, the energies flag, and the usually meagre and insecure rewards of crime finally prove inadequate.

This happens whether or not offences come to the attention of the criminal justice system and can be thought of as 'natural' desistance. As people grow up, they tend to reduce or give up foolish, dangerous and stigmatising behaviour. Among people who remain active offenders into their early 20s, the most common triggers of desistance are entering into a stable relationship, gaining a foothold on to a legitimate livelihood, and experiencing a spiritual awakening such as 'finding God'. Others will stop sooner if their drug dependence, emotional or mental health problems, or educational and employment deficits are addressed. Still others will desist sooner if they are given decent housing, educational and skills training, and the financial resources to meet basic needs.

Pulling these strands together, the following insights seem to be true:

- >Using birthdays as an arbitrary indicator of adulthood is unwise and effectively prevents sensible approaches for dealing with well-understood problems of young adult offenders;
- >Once the arbitrary line between childhood and adulthood is erased, the literature on both risk-and-protective factors and criminal justice treatment evaluation provides numerous lessons for application to individual offenders, depending on their individual needs and maturity;
- >Continuing to ignore the immaturity and malleability of many young adult offenders will continue to harm young adults whilst not making life safer for the rest of us.

*“When you’re 18 you’re relied to do everything yourself. When you’re 16, you get help. When you’re 18, you’re left on your own.” (Young woman, Birmingham)*



# 1 Developing a criminal justice model for young adults in transition

Many of the young adults in custody have been convicted or cautioned through the youth justice system before the age of 18. Yet, the day that a young person turns 18 and is convicted of a crime, he or she moves from the supervision of the Youth Offending Teams to the National Probation Service. Youth Offending Teams are not able to deal with him or her even if this would be more appropriate. Valuable knowledge about which ‘interventions’ work with particular young adults is lost when they are passed on to probation officers.

At the same time, young adults lose easy access to support services within Youth Offending Teams. Now over 18, they are subject to different sentences, different programmes, and different supervision – despite the fact that they may have had similar experiences, be committing similar crimes and have similar needs to those just under the age of 18. Since the Youth Offending Teams are not integrated with the adult system, information gathered through the youth justice assessment processes may be lost.

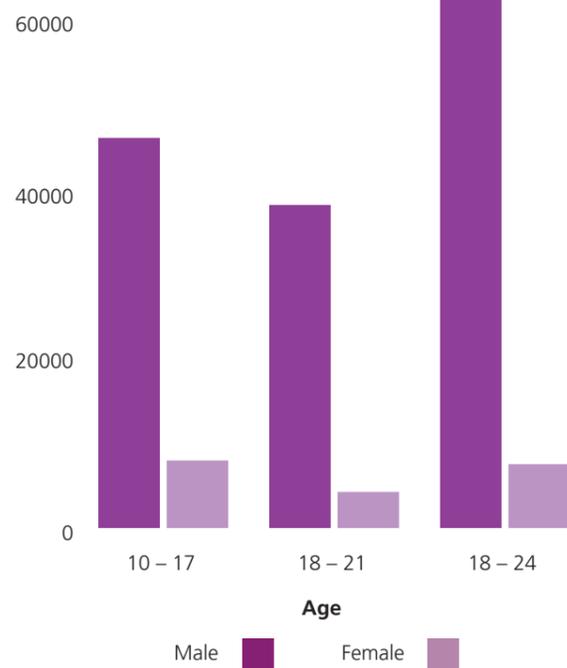
Though young adults often live chaotic lives and are in need of intensive support, there is currently no specific work undertaken with young adults. The adult criminal justice system does not take into account the ‘age crime curve’ in which young adults naturally desist from crime at different times according to their maturity levels.<sup>5</sup> This often results in custodial sentences for immature young adults that only serve to prolong their criminality.

Most young adults have different needs from older adults. The majority of those in custody have basic skills, a history of unemployment, and levels of school exclusion that are over a third worse than those of older prisoners. Among young adults, substance misuse problems, mental health problems and more basic problems with accessing housing or work can often be related (albeit not as a simple causal relationship) to the propensity to continue to commit crimes.

In 2002, the Scottish Executive suggested easing the transition between the youth justice and adult justice systems and signalled a wish to include young adults in the youth justice system up to the age of 21, though this has not been implemented. Many in England and Wales have also called for the remit of the Youth Justice Board to be extended to cover young adults until the age of 24.<sup>7</sup>

These needs of young adults are overlooked because no statutory body is charged with meeting their needs – either in the criminal justice system or elsewhere. For those under 18, the chief executive of the Youth Justice Board is answerable for youth justice and will stand up for their interests. The Youth Justice Board and local Youth Offending Teams do attempt to address the complex needs of children and young people under the age of 18 through a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach. As young adults are subsumed within the general adult population, no one stands up for them or attempts to meet their very different needs.

This would however perpetuate the artificial age boundary into which some in need may fall and would do nothing to address the key problem of transition between two different youth and adult systems. Extending the remit of the Youth Justice Board to an older age group may also lose the current focus of the Youth Justice Board and Youth Offending Teams on children and young teenagers.



Numbers of young people in the criminal justice system on community orders in 2003<sup>6</sup>

*“Most of the time they just ask you to come in, ask a couple of questions – ‘What have you been doing? Have you been in trouble?’ I say ‘no’. ‘Alright. Go home’. Not that I mind about that because I don’t like sitting in probation for hours on end... But really they should be saying, ‘what do you want to do?’ ‘What can we help you with?’ Somebody really should be putting money into services for us. Instead of getting into trouble, we could go to a youth centre and do courses. Everybody wonders why we are out nicking cars, robbing people, stabbing people. It’s something to do, innit?”*  
(Young man, Cardiff)

#### Centre for Court Innovation, Red Hook Community Court, New York

The Centre for Court Innovation is a public-private partnership dedicated to enhancing the performance of courts and those whose work intersects with the courts. Conceived by the Centre, Red Hook Community Court launched in 2000 and has become an award winning justice project that aims to mix criminal justice sanctions with problem solving and prevention of crime through provision of social and other support. Support is offered both to those who are in the criminal justice system, and others in the community who may need help. A single judge hears cases that would normally be distributed among three different courts – civil, family and criminal. Sanctions dispensable by the judge include: community restitution projects, on-site job training, drug treatment and mental health counselling. Help is also available for those with housing tenancy disputes.

Red Hook includes a youth court which trains local teenagers as jurors, judges and lawyers with the aim of employing positive peer pressure. The youth court deals with teenagers aged between 10 and 16 who have committed low-level offences (such as vandalism, under age drinking and truancy). As with the adult court, sanctions are mixed with social services and support. The court hears about 100 cases per year.

Instead much greater integration of work between the youth justice system and the adult system is needed. Having two systems allows young adults to fall into the gap between the two systems when they are making many other transitions in their lives. There is no reason to believe that all young adults of a similar age have the same needs and levels of emotional maturity. The age-delineated approach to the criminal justice system should be replaced by a ‘life-course’ approach that would enable the best use of youth provision, as well as adult resources, according to need.

Instead of having two separate systems, there should be one criminal justice system that addresses the problems and needs of the individual. A life-course approach would stress the complex relations between different stages of life – from infancy to old age – instead of seeing different age groups in isolation. It would consider at what stage of life, interventions are likely to be most effective – and where they may prove counterproductive. A unified system would, for example, enable the integration of assessments which are currently divided between the Offender Assessment System (OASys) and ASSET, its junior version for under 18s.

A unified system would not be dictated by age – and would not presume that full maturity is reached at a particular birthday. It would allow offenders above 18 to be treated in the criminal justice system as young people with individual needs rather than simply as adults. However, the Commission recognises that an integrated youth justice and adult criminal justice system is a radical long-term ideal. Over time the Commission would like to move to a life-course approach whereby it is accepted that young people can have similar needs in the years before and after their 18th birthday.

- >Between 40 – 49 per cent of young men in custody (aged between 18 and 21) have been in local authority residential care.
- >40 per cent of young women and 25 per cent of young men in custody (aged between 18 and 21) report having suffered violence at home.
- >Over 30 per cent of young women in custody (between the ages of 18 and 21) report having experienced sexual abuse at home.

### C-FAR – Centre for Adolescent Rehabilitation, Devon

Before it was forced to close due to a lack of criminal justice system funding in 2005, Commissioners visited C-FAR in Devon. C-FAR developed innovative ways of working with 18 to 24 year old young men on release from prison in the south west. The project worked with some of the most prolific offenders and polysubstance drug users in the region in a 11-week residential programme which included modules of personal development, social or life skills training, education and empowerment followed by a minimum nine months of support in the community. Before leaving the residential component a community link worker helped the young men find a home in the community. An advocate or mentor would be on hand to assist in finding education, training or employment, and provide personal support on the end of a phone when necessary. Of note, in the last year of its work, over 40 per cent of referrals were being made by Crown Courts as an alternative to custody.

Even those who were unable to complete the residential course received help from the project's network of volunteers in the community. C-FAR received two largely positive evaluations in 2004, and lightened the load for the probation service in the south west which would otherwise have had to supervise these ex-offenders. Despite this, it received less than 9 per cent of its funding from the Home Office. Though there was local concern when the project was first set up, it built excellent links with the community, and at the time of its demise local people signed a petition in support of the Centre. While on average it costs more than £36 000 a year for a prison place, the total cost of the residential and community support in C-FAR was only £16 000. It reported a reoffending rate of 40 per cent compared to over 75 – 80 per cent national reoffending rates for those released from prison without such support. Importantly, those that did re-offend showed a marked reduction in both level and type of offending. Following considerable public support, three members of the former management team have been working as volunteers in an effort to resurrect the project and the programme. The new company is called Life Change UK.

### Supporting young adults within the current system

Though an integrated criminal justice system remains a long-term aspiration, a realistic and achievable immediate proposal is the creation of new strategic Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Teams in every local criminal justice area.

T2A Teams should have a statutory obligation to manage transition arrangements for young adults between the youth justice and criminal justice systems. They would be responsible for monitoring the 'blurring' of youth and adult justice systems and ensuring that young adults who had been in care were being properly protected as outlined in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 relevant for those up to the age of 21.

In order to accomplish this bridging role, T2A Teams should include representatives from the National Offender Management Service, Connexions, Youth Offending Teams, Drug (and Alcohol) Action Teams and representatives from all public agencies responsible for health, education, housing, and social services. They should also invite representatives from the voluntary, community and private sectors where appropriate. Local authority chief executives or the new directors of adult services should also sit on T2A teams. This would finally give young adult services the kind of accountability and focus that youth justice has had for years.

While there has been much recent policy focus by the National Offender Management Service on the joining up of service provision with criminal justice agencies under the National Reoffending Action Plan, criminal justice agencies are not accountable for other services under the remit of other government departments. They have no strategic control, for example, over mental health services or access to education. T2A teams would complement Regional Offender Managers in implementing the National Reoffending Action Plan, which outlines the need for greater joined-up working between relevant Government departments and agencies.<sup>8</sup> T2A Teams would also complement the work of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (Community Safety Partnerships in Wales), Local Criminal Justice Boards and Drug Action (and Alcohol) Teams at local levels.

T2A Teams would measure the effectiveness of local services that are the responsibility of government departments and agencies other than the Home Office – for example in education, employment, housing and health. They would also hold 'strategic responsibility' for filtering information about local needs back to local statutory agencies such as NHS trusts and local education authorities. Currently, local authorities do not audit the needs of young adults and therefore do not know what kind of services they require.



Diagrammatic representation of relationships between strategic members of T2A Teams

#### T2A Teams would:

- >Ensure that all agencies and services that deal with young adult offenders treat them as a strategic priority and have policies aimed at improving the life chances of young adults in the criminal justice system, including ensuring that appropriate provision and help is available for young women and Black and minority ethnic young adults.
- >Highlight local failures in service provision to contributing partners including providers of health and education and other government departments.
- >Ease the transition between youth and adult justice systems so that the Youth Justice Board's knowledge of working with young people is not lost.
- >Increase local and national accountability for service provision by highlighting any local failures at a strategic level.
- >Ensure that the existing provisions in the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 are implemented in their local area.
- >Ensure that adequate resettlement arrangements between prison and the community are in place.

#### Who would join the T2A Teams?

Public, private and voluntary sector agencies could make specific contributions to the T2A teams. Representatives from the local Drug (and Alcohol) Action teams, directors of adult services in local authorities, and Connexions should participate to make them aware of any failures in services for young adults. Other members should include the directors of public agencies responsible for health, education and housing. The Commission has uncovered a lack of provision in the voluntary sector aimed specifically at young adults in transition or in the criminal justice system. Encouraging voluntary and community sector representatives to attend should encourage the sharing of practice on work with young adults, and the development of funding sources for work with young adults.

#### T2A National Champion

The principal recommendation (never implemented) made by the Chief Inspector of Prisons in a 1997 thematic report was that young adults should have a single person overseeing their treatment and care.<sup>9</sup> Local T2A managers, appointed jointly by the National Offender Management Service, the Youth Justice Board and statutory agencies, should fulfil this role across different agencies.

An overall T2A National Champion post should be created to monitor the integration of young adults between the youth justice and adult criminal justice system. The post should be a joint appointment by relevant government departments.



### Ringe Youth Prison, Denmark

The aim of the Youth Prison in Ringe, which caters for young men aged between 15 and 28 and all women who receive prison sentences in Denmark, is to make life as normal as possible for young people in order to aid re-integration back into the community. Young people imprisoned in Ringe tend to have been convicted of serious offences and have problems with substance misuse.

Sections or 'wings' of the prison have either 8, 12 or 16 beds. Apart from those on the specialised drug treatment wing or the 'vulnerable' wing, residents mix during the day, at work or in classes. Young men and young women mix relatively freely within the prison based on the belief that mixed sex sections help keep the prison calm. Each wing is centred around a kitchen and living area. Residents are paid for the work or education they engage in during the day and are able to buy food from the prison shop and cook for themselves. Residents are also responsible for cleaning their own areas and washing their own clothes. Personal possessions are allowed in the bedrooms.

All residents are allocated a key contact person at the prison who they see 2–3 times a month. Guards are expected to have roles other than security such as social support workers, administrators and educators. Staff can also be trained to deliver cognitive behavioural programmes.

### Recommendation 1 Develop a unified criminal justice system and T2A Teams

The Commission recommends:

- >Using age as the arbitrary division between youth and adult criminal justice systems is unwise and prevents sensible approaches for dealing with well-understood problems of young adult offenders. In the long term, a unified criminal justice system should be developed which removes the need for two separate systems and which enables interventions to be tailored to the maturity and needs of the individual.
- >As an interim but immediate transitional arrangement, Transition to Adulthood teams (T2A Teams) should be established in every local criminal justice area to take responsibility for young adults in the criminal justice system. T2A Teams should comprise representatives from the National Offender Management Service, Youth Offending Teams, Connexions, Drug (and Alcohol) Action Teams, local authorities and the independent and voluntary sector. A National T2A Champion should be appointed with strategic oversight of local teams.
- >T2A Teams and the T2A Champion should give special attention to the needs and special circumstances of young Black and minority ethnic adults. This should include ongoing scrutiny of programmes and policies to ensure they do not treat young Black and minority ethnic adults with disproportionate severity, and sustained efforts are made to develop culturally appropriate interventions for distinct groups of young adult offenders.
- >T2A Teams should also pay special attention to young adult female offenders. Though a small percentage of young adult offenders, young women in the criminal justice system have distinct problems and needs, ranging from caring for dependent children, to being in abusive relationships, to having a high likelihood of mental health problems. They need to be offered more effective support within the criminal justice system and especially in custody.

*“When you’re under 18, you get fines and community service – a chance to change your ways. Some over 18 go straight to jail and never get that chance.” (Young man, Cardiff)*

## 2 Sentencing young adults on age and maturity

Approximately 9000 young people between the ages of 18 and 21 are in prisons in England and Wales. Young adults are sentenced as adults – treated as fully mature when they are not. Often their crimes are youthful in nature, and spending time in custody disrupts the ability of young adults to complete the transition to adulthood that growing out of crime requires.

Everyone in England and Wales over the age of 18 who is convicted of an offence can be sentenced to a single generic community sentence under the 2003 Criminal Justice Act (implemented in April 2005).<sup>11</sup> The range of possible sentences includes unpaid work, curfew, exclusion, residential mental health treatment, drug rehabilitation, alcohol treatment and supervision. Previous offending is an aggravating factor in the length and type of sentence an adult receives.

Those who have committed a first offence and are brought before the court sometimes end up in custody. This is in sharp contrast to the approach by the youth justice system where young people who come to the attention of the police are diverted away from the court system wherever possible through a system of reprimands, final warnings and referral orders.<sup>12</sup>

There is, at times, an acceptance in government that young adults are a distinct group that should not be treated as fully formed adults. The continued existence of Young Offender Institutions and Young Offender Institution wings in adult prisons is an acknowledgement that young people over the age of 18 still have distinct needs that should be catered for outside the adult custodial system. However, this is now clouded by confusion since the sentence of detention to a Young Offenders Institution was abolished by legislation in 2000. This change has not yet been implemented as the Government appears unsure of what should be in place instead. In a 1997 thematic report on young prisoners (18 to 21) the then Chief Inspector of Prisons concluded that:

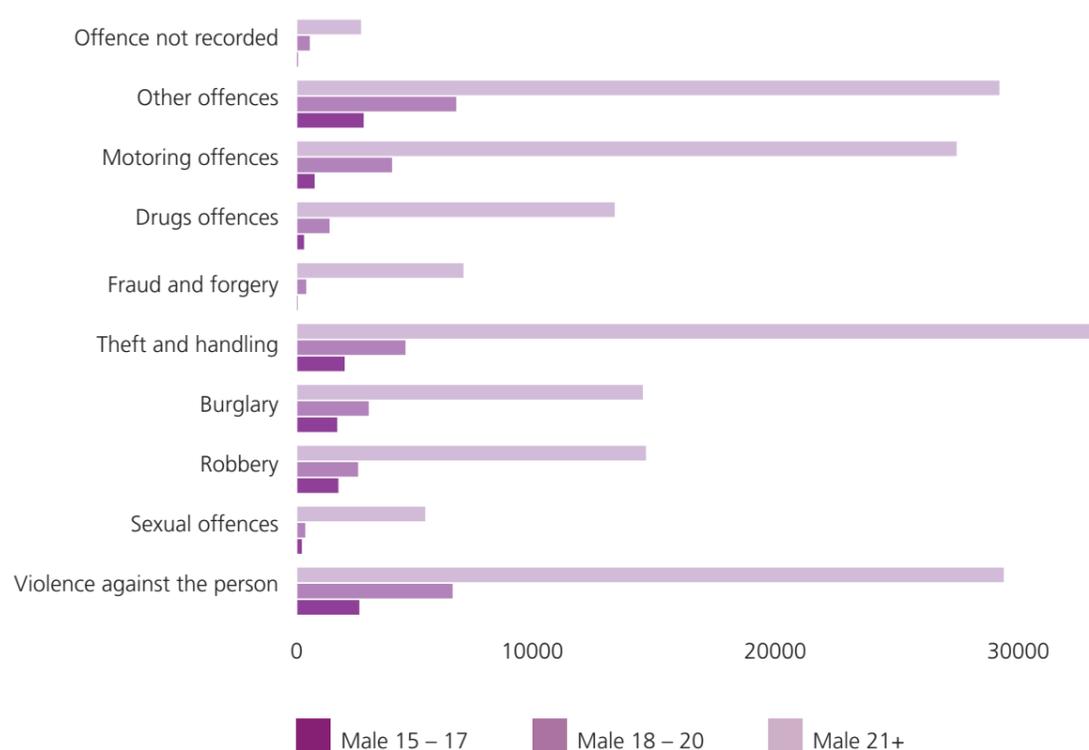
*“In my view it would be wrong to ignore the particular needs of those aged 18 to 21 by regarding them as adult prisoners. For many the process of maturation will still be taking place beyond the age of 18 and they still require help and direction to become adults. The inability to withstand peer pressure is a particular feature of this age group. Others will be vulnerable and, if mixed with adults, might well be preyed upon.”<sup>13</sup>*

Yet despite this acknowledgement, and Government’s proclaimed commitment to community alternatives, the total numbers of young adults in custody has increased. From 1997 to 2002 the number of young adults sentenced to custody increased by 10 per cent. From 1992 to 2002 the number of young adults in custody increased by 49 per cent.<sup>14</sup> There has been a particular increase in the numbers of young adult women being sent to prison over the last decade – a 270 per cent increase from 265 in 1992 to 986 in 2002.

### Custody is expensive and does not work

Sentencing young adults to custody is counterproductive because it delays the natural process of desistance from crime. Yet despite wide acknowledgement that prison is a costly failure, the number of young adults in custody has not fallen.

A recent government-commissioned review of the criminal justice system, which led to the setting up of the National Offender Management Service, acknowledged that the increased use of prison and probation has only had a limited impact on crime, that sentencing is often poorly targeted and that there is little evidence to suggest that increasing the severity of punishment is a significant deterrent to crime.<sup>15</sup>



Offences young men in custody convicted for in 2003<sup>10</sup>

*“There’s bullies in there. And prison breeds animals really. If it’s breeding animals, life can’t be easy in there. They are getting messed up in the head. If you’re messed up in the head and you coming out to only go back in. Life ain’t that easy cos it’s messed you up and made you a certain way.”*

(Young man, Hackney)

## Germany and the Youth Court Law

The 1953 Youth Court Law Section 105 introduced a flexible system for 18 – 20 year olds to allow them to be sentenced under the juvenile justice system on the grounds of variations in maturation, social and moral development and integration into the adult world. Sentencers are required by statute to have training in youth issues (although this reputedly does not always happen in practice) and can decide to transfer an 18 - 20 year old to the juvenile sentencing system. In the German adult sentencing system the offence committed provides the focus of the sentence. In the German Youth Justice System, however, the offender’s need for rehabilitation is the key focus.

German sentencers base their decision as to whether to transfer the young adult or not on whether a psychological evaluation reveals a youthful personality in terms of intellectual and emotional maturity, and whether an offence involves typical juvenile misbehaviour in type, circumstance and motive.

Nearly 70 per cent of 18 to 20 year olds sentenced to a Young Offender Institution (YOI) or prison are reconvicted within two years of release.<sup>16</sup> In 2002 the Social Exclusion Unit concluded that “prison sentences are not succeeding in turning the majority of offenders away from crime.”<sup>17</sup> The cost to the criminal justice system alone of re-offending (among all adults) is £11 billion a year without taking into account the cost to victims, the community, and the offenders themselves. The Audit Commission also found that locking up children and young people is costly and ineffective compared with community-based solutions.<sup>18</sup>

## Prison can be unsafe and harm young people

Prison directly harms young adults emotionally and physically, particularly the high numbers who have suffered from violence or sexual abuse as children. As Young Offender Institutions are often full, many young men are placed in adult prisons where, as the youngest and often most vulnerable, they are subject to bullying. Due to the shortage of specialist accommodation, young women are also often placed in adult prisons. The latest inspection of Holloway prison for women found dirty, mice-infested cells and widespread bullying over drugs and medications.<sup>19</sup> The principal recommendation in the previous inspection in 2002 was that girls should no longer be kept at Holloway. A recent inspection of Bristol prison where young male prisoners are held alongside older prisoners, including sex offenders, found that more than one-third of inmates said that they felt unsafe.<sup>20</sup>

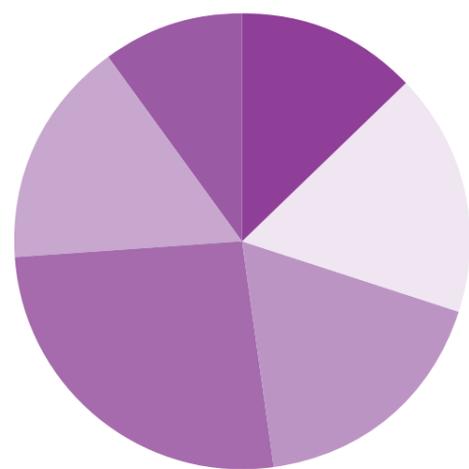
Many organisations have highlighted how the extreme overcrowding in Young Offenders Institutions and prisons can make them unsafe. According to a 2004 study, more than half the prisons holding young people were overcrowded, in some cases by more than 50 per cent. In 13 prisons (out of 48) young prisoners shared cells intended for only one. The same study reported that “aside from the obvious discomforts of overcrowding – it is often unhygienic and unhealthy.”

The constant influx of new prisoners into a crowded system means that prisoners have to be frequently moved around the prison network. This can be psychologically disruptive and interfere with ongoing work such as education courses that can be helpful in promoting desistance.<sup>21</sup>

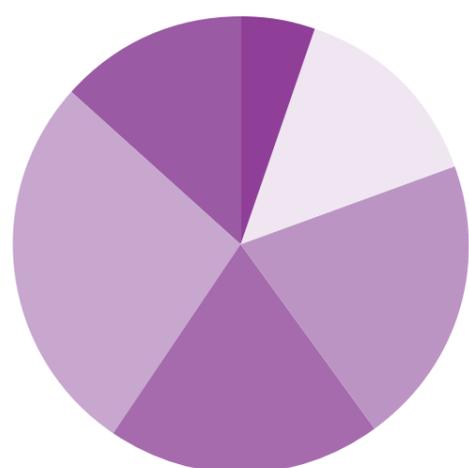
## Youthfulness and precedents for considering age in criminal justice system

Introducing more community sentences is not the only way to tackle the judiciary’s use of custodial sentences. A radical method to reduce the numbers of young adults in custody may be to remove the powers of sentencing from magistrates. However, the most realistic response – tried and tested elsewhere in Europe – is to statutorily require sentencers to take into account the age and emotional maturity of young adults.

In other western European countries it is common for young adults over the age of 18 to be treated differently from older adults. The prevailing ethos is that diversion away from the prison system should occur wherever possible. In Germany, the age of criminal responsibility is 14. Between the ages of 14 and 17, children are dealt with by the youth justice system. The German system makes explicit provision for young adults between the age of 18 and 20, who remain the responsibility of the juvenile court based on their level of maturity.<sup>22</sup> In 2000, Spain adopted a similar approach to young adults. In 2001, both Austria and Lithuania introduced a flexible system to deal with young adult offenders and allow sentencers the option to choose an appropriate sanction from either the juvenile or the adult criminal law, depending on the personality and maturity of the individual young offender. The Netherlands legal system also provides alternatives to imposing adult penal sanctions on young adult offenders. In Finland a special board can decide whether to sentence a young adult to a youth or an adult penal institution.



Numbers of previous convictions of young men aged 18 – 20 in custody in 2002<sup>23</sup>



Receptions into custody 2003 due to breach of conditions of community order (male and female)<sup>24</sup>

Sentencing on the grounds of youth and maturity may be particularly important for particular offences. For example, 18 to 24 year olds account for over a third of all receptions into prison for breach of a community order. Breach of a community order refers to the person not meeting the conditions of the order – commonly, this may be not meeting a curfew or not keeping appointments with probation officers. Yet, the evidence shows that these are precisely the conditions that young adults do not meet by virtue of their immaturity. Sentencers should be able to take this into account, both when imposing conditions on the young person when passing sentence, and when a young person returns before them after a probation officer has recorded them as having ‘breached’ their order.

Currently the court determines the sentence on the basis of pre-sentence reports which contextualise the circumstances of the crime and the individual who committed it, and advise on the most appropriate forms of intervention and disposal. The Commission heard evidence that sentencers are not confident in the veracity and robustness of pre-sentence reports, often because they are completed by junior-level probation officers. It is critical that pre-sentence reports are given a more central role for young adults and that they are written by someone who is trained in adolescent and development issues. Sentencers would need to have this information in order to take into account the maturity of the young adult. It would also require greater training of magistrates and judges on how developmental and maturity issues affect propensity to commit further crime.

### Diverting first time young adult offenders out of the courtroom

Forty-two per cent of all first time offenders are between the ages of 18 and 20, an age when they are likely to grow out of crime as they make the transition to full adulthood.<sup>25</sup> As outlined in the previous section, custodial sentences are likely to delay this process and increase the risk of re-offending. Therefore the priority for first time offenders should be to divert them from the court system, where they face the possibility of imprisonment for minor offences, whenever possible. Diverting young adults away from court also provides an opportunity to address the mental health needs and substance misuse that if left untreated may lead to further offending.

Under the adult system first time offenders are currently being diverted by simple cautions and, under a pilot scheme, conditional cautions. The Commission believes that conditional cautions, together with the principles of restorative justice that were central to recent reforms in the youth justice system, will be a more effective way of avoiding the harm that the criminal justice system can do.

Extending the principles of youth offender panels currently in operation in the youth justice system to young adults would be particularly appropriate because they are still at a stage in their lives when their behaviour can dramatically change.<sup>26</sup> A full and informal discussion of the offence may enable a young adult to change behaviour through making the links between victimhood and offending. The extension of panels should not, though, result in their use for relatively minor offences that would be better dealt with through the use of a conditional discharge or fine. The principles of restorative justice, where the parties with a stake in a specific offence collectively resolve how to deal with it, are suited to young adults because they are proportionately most likely to be victims of crime as well as offenders.

## Conditional Cautions

Conditional cautions were introduced in the 2003 Criminal Justice Act for adults who admit guilt when charged. They have been formulated for where the public interest would be better met by diversion from court with conditions rather than by a prosecution. The scheme is currently being rolled out and evaluated. Decisions about whether to issue a conditional caution rather than prosecute or issue a simple caution are generally made by the Crown Prosecution Service and not the police. Conditions may include some 'restorative' processes aimed at encouraging people to take responsibility for their actions.

## Recommendation 2 Take into account age and maturity of young adults when sentencing

The Commission recommends:

- Sentencers should be required to take into account the age, emotional maturity of the individual and the nature of the crime of young adults. Specialists in the National Offender Management Service should give an assessment of an offender's maturity to the court. Sentencers should also be given training in youth issues.
- There should always be a strong presumption against custody for young adults. As most young offenders stop offending at age 23, it would make sense to require sentencers to refrain from imposing custody in all but the most serious cases until after then.
- Young adults convicted of first time or minor offences should be diverted away from the criminal justice system wherever possible through the use of conditional cautions or the extension of youth offender panels.

# 3 Policing young adults

63,639 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PNDs) were issued by police forces in England and Wales. 33,408, (52 per cent) were issued to 16 – 24 year olds. Eighty-seven per cent of PNDs were issued for 'causing harassment, alarm or distress' and 'drunk and disorderly'.<sup>27</sup>



The police are usually the first criminal justice agency with which young people come into contact. Young people are likely to come into contact with the police by virtue of being young, which means that they are more likely to be on the street in public places, and more likely to be engaged in offending which is public and therefore more visible.

The Penalty Notices for Disorder figures show that young people are a significant proportion of those who come into contact with the police, as do the stop and search figures. In England and Wales in total in 2003-4, young people aged between 10 and 20 accounted for nearly two fifths of all police stops and searches.<sup>28</sup> Young people who spoke to the Commission believed this is often to do with their clothing – in particular they were more likely to be stopped by the police if they were, for example, wearing hoodies.

Recently published Home Office statistics show that Black people are six times more likely to be stopped and searched, three times more likely to be arrested, and seven times more likely to be in prison than the white majority. Increasingly, though, it is also young Muslims who are being stopped and searched. Levels of 'disproportionality' have increased steadily since 1999.<sup>29</sup>

The Home Office acknowledges that stop and search is a key 'gateway' into the criminal justice system meaning that the more likely an individual is to be stopped by the police, the more likely it is that he or she will be arrested for something. Self-report surveys show that a substantial proportion of young people break the law, yet many are never caught or arrested for this. If a young person lives in a community where there is a heavy police presence, or is more likely to be stopped because of the colour of their skin, then he or she is also more likely to be caught for something and therefore arrested and is more likely to feel antagonistic towards the police.

The complaints of young people focused on stop and search powers of the police and the way in which this is carried out. There are concerns stop and search can be a form of harassment at times, if it is not warranted. It should not be the case that Black and minority ethnic young people are vastly more likely to be arrested than white young people.

Young adults felt that disproportionate stops and searches against young people and especially against Black and minority ethnic young people undermine confidence in the police, skew the crime figures and have a negative impact on young people themselves. Young adults felt that the frequency of stops and searches, and the way in which they are carried out, demonstrated that the police did not respect them. Those who took part in a Commission focus group were largely unaware that they were entitled to complain about inappropriate stops and searches or knew how to.

## Developing better relationships between the police and young people at community level

Currently, police authorities are required to consult with local communities concerning stop and search policies, but not specifically with young people. Chief constables should agree with communities on what the priorities and measures of effectiveness of stop and search should be. The recent Policing White Paper (Building Communities, Beating Crime) emphasised this.

*“The police have no respect for us, why should we have respect for them?”* (Young man, Manchester)

*“It’s like with some police officers, they put their uniform on in the morning and they think they are like Dangermouse or something. My friend got stopped 37 times last year, and one of the reasons he was stopped was because ‘you fit the criminal criteria’ because he was wearing Lacoste.”*

(Young man, late teens, Birmingham)

### Policing in the West Midlands

In the West Midlands, while accounting for only 1.6 per cent of the total population, Black Caribbean people account for 14.3 per cent of the total number of police stops and searches. 8 in every 1000 white people and 44 in every 1000 Black people have been stopped and searched. The majority of these stops are recorded as on suspicion of stolen property or drugs.<sup>30</sup>

Police forces should convene local community forums specifically for young people, and in particular from communities where large numbers of young people are regularly arrested or stopped and searched by the police. These forums should enable young adults to feed back general perceptions about policing in their area, and would provide an opportunity for police to fulfil their statutory duty to explain Section 95 figures (which statutorily break down figures on race and the criminal justice system) to young adults.<sup>31</sup>

This is particularly important because young adults are a key constituency for the police, given their propensity to come into contact with them either through stop and search, arrest or equally as victims of crime. Young adults are entitled to expect local accountability.

### Recommendation 3 Improve the policing of young adults

The Commission recommends:

- >The Independent Police Complaints Commission and Home Office Stop and Search Action Team should convene an advisory group of young adults in order to enter an ongoing dialogue about policing of young people, in particular highlighting the disproportionate impact of policing on Black and minority ethnic young adults.
- >Police should develop local community forums for engaging with young adults to develop non-discriminatory policing practices towards youth, and to enable them to influence policing priorities and strategies. The forum should be used to share local ‘Section 95’ statistics on race and the criminal justice system, and to publicise the complaints procedure. The forums should use community mediators.

*“Also, it’s depression as well. I feel a lot of us have grown around areas where we see this every day, so we are not really registering whether this is right or wrong... I haven’t really registered it in my brain what I’m doing until 6 months later and I’ve thought ‘damn, I regret this’. I think a lot of us are depressed.” (Young woman, Birmingham)*

- Nearly 90 per cent of 18 – 21 year olds in custody had at least one form of mental illness ranging from severe psychosis to depression, according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS).
- 11 per cent of young men sentenced to custody and 13 per cent of remanded young men had received mental health treatment in the 12 months leading to the sentence.
- 27 per cent of young women in custody had received mental health treatment in the 12 months leading to custody.
- 84 per cent of remanded and 88 per cent of sentenced male young prisoners have antisocial or paranoid personality disorder (perhaps connected to drug misuse or custody itself).<sup>32</sup>

## 4 Improving mental health care for young adults

Failings in mental health services for young adults in the criminal justice system are a matter of great concern. The transition to adulthood is a time in young adults’ lives when mental health problems may become particularly apparent – perhaps because of pressures of rapid change. Young people are also unlikely to foresee their mental health crisis if they have no previous experience or diagnosis of mental illness.<sup>33</sup> Shortcomings in the system actively harm young adults and, by failing to provide preventative treatment, can lead to further offending.

Young adults in custody are particularly badly affected by high comparative levels of mental illness. This is unsurprising given that mental health risks are linked to the same socio-economic factors which can lead to offending. Young people from the poorest households are three times more likely to have poor mental health than children in better off households. This can have an impact on particular communities such as Black and minority ethnic groups who are more likely to suffer from poor quality housing, low wages, and unemployment which is itself linked to poor access to services.

Many young adults suffer from ‘dual diagnosis’ – where mental health problems are linked with other problems especially dependency on alcohol or drugs. The Office of National Statistics found that 70 per cent of sentenced young men and 51 per cent of sentenced young women had particularly high alcohol consumption rates, and 96 per cent of young men and 84 per cent of young women had tried at least one illegal drug. An estimated 25 to 40 per cent of people with learning disabilities experience risk factors associated with mental health problems.

Recent reports show that there are significant failings in prison mental health care. Both the Home Affairs Select Committee and Social Exclusion Unit cite evidence of mentally ill young adults being inappropriately imprisoned because of failings in community health care. They also suggest that it is routine for prisoners not to be transferred out of the prison service when they become mentally ill in custody. The 2002 Social Exclusion Report, *Reducing Reoffending*, raised the concern that the prison system is not currently able to deal with the issues of mental health among young adult prisoners.

Imprisonment can itself make mental health problems worse. Nearly 50 per cent of suicides in prison happen within the first month of being in prison, with 12 per cent occurring within the first few hours.<sup>34</sup> Bullying in Young Offender Institutions has been well documented, not least by the Chief Inspector of Prisons. Bullying and excessive time spent in cells will affect a prisoner’s mental health, particularly if he or she is already vulnerable.

There is also a problem with the gap between youth and adult mental health services outside the criminal justice system. An Audit Commission study in 2002 found that 20 per cent of health authorities, who are responsible for commissioning mental health services, were unsure at what age their adolescent services finished. Of the health authorities that did know, around a third finished treatment at 16 while others carried on until 18 and beyond.<sup>35</sup>

The Rethinking Crime and Punishment Inquiry looked at the situation in Finland where concerns about adolescent mental health are such that young people with difficulties are sentenced to psychiatric units rather than custody. Currently in England and Wales there are 150 ‘diversion’ schemes at court or in police stations to identify those with mental health problems for whom custody would not be appropriate. None, however, are focused on young adults to highlight their specific needs – particularly the risk that they will fall into gaps between youth and adult services. They are not governed by any statutory requirement, how (and even whether) they operate is voluntary and subject to funding pressures.

*“Mental and physical health problems may be made worse by imprisonment unless dealt with. Inadequately treated, they will make it more difficult for prisoners to make the best use of opportunities such as education and training which can reduce re-offending.”* (Social Exclusion Unit, Reducing Reoffending by Ex-Prisoners 2002)

## Revolving Doors Agency

The Revolving Doors Agency operates two Young People Link Worker schemes in Haringey, North London and Gillingham, Kent, working with 15-21 year olds who have mental health problems and are either in prison, serving community sentences or have a history of offending. Their clients have often used drugs and alcohol to ‘manage’ their mental problems. Many have undiagnosed conduct and behavioural disorders such as Attention Defecit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). These young adults, many of whom will have suffered physical or sexual abuse, are the most vulnerable and hardest to engage. Typically, they lead chaotic lives, find it difficult to keep appointments and have a history of losing contact with services .

Consequently, they have fallen into the gaps between services or been turned away for failing to comply with a service’s rules of engagement. The Link Worker schemes reach out to them by offering a voluntary service that gives them an opportunity to explore what has happened in their lives and equips them with the skills to engage with programmes that can tackle their multiple problems.

Link Workers work in pairs with the young people, slowly building up trust. Young adults are given the space to feel safe, to work through their trauma and discover what they need, and are not rejected for making mistakes and refusing to co-operate. When they are ready to engage with services the Link Workers will work with them to develop a support plan and help them navigate the myriad of services that exist. Sometimes this will involve reuniting the young people with statutory services with whom they have lost touch. It might also involve accompanying them to court and explaining the legal process to them. Link Workers will also help them sort out benefits claims, find and manage accommodation, and access substance misuse services and mental health support programmes. After 18 months, the emerging findings suggest that the Link Worker approach could be making a difference to the young people’s lives. Around two-thirds of clients have shown improvements in their mental health and the substance misuse problems. In Kent, where there has been a particular focus on housing support, the housing situation of more than half the young people on the scheme has improved.

It is an opportune time to suggest measures that highlight the needs of young adults in the criminal justice system – in improving mental health care both in custody, and in the community. By 2006 NHS mental health in-services will be in all prisons, commissioned by newly restructured primary care trusts. Following reconstruction, NHS Primary care trusts could use this opportunity to rewrite their strategies to strengthen links between youth and adult services, inside prison and out.

Particular attention needs to be paid to the mental health requirements and treatment of Black and minority ethnic young people. Young Black and minority ethnic people may be disproportionately affected by mental health problems because a large number have a history of homelessness, school exclusion or residential care. Young African Caribbean men are much more likely to be referred through the criminal justice system to mental health services than other groups. People from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds are also more likely to be given physical treatments in mental health care – drugs and electric shock treatment –

than white counterparts. Experiencing racism can also impact on mental health. A recent study showed that victims of discrimination are more likely to suffer respiratory illness, hypertension, anxiety, depression and psychosis. A study by the charity Young Minds found that many adult services are not focused on the needs of Black and minority ethnic young people. A number of services targeted at this group had recently closed or were under threat of closure due to funding insecurities.<sup>36</sup>

The Department of Health has published the Offender Mental Health Pathway, which serves as guidance to providers and commissioners on mental health services, for those involved in the criminal justice system. At present there is little reference to Black and minority ethnic prisoners while the Department of Health document Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care makes reference to Black and minority ethnic prisoners in a general sense – but neither document makes reference to Black and minority ethnic young adults and the criminal justice system with the explicitness that is required.

## Recommendation 4 Target mental health services on young adults

The Commission recommends:

- >Each primary care trust should have a strategy for young adults with mental health care needs, including those within the criminal justice system. The National Offender Management Service with the Department of Health should consider how young adults with mental health problems can be identified and diverted away from custody where possible.
- >Particular attention should be paid to Black and minority ethnic young adults, a group over-represented both in the criminal justice system and in mental health care. This group should be fully represented in all relevant documents and strategies – including the Offender Mental Health Care Pathway, and Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care.

*“The only way for me to get off drugs is to change my lifestyle. That means changing my friends, changing everything. I’ve got nothing to do at the moment. DTTO, when you first go there, they say you’re going to be there every day of the week, the only thing I’ve got to do is drink my methadone and go there and sign in, that’s it. All I’m doing is getting my medication, going there, signing in and then going to smoke. So now I’m doing it myself. I’ve got my own drug counsellor and I try to make things to do in the day. Yesterday and the day before I painted my flat, a couple of days before that I jet-washed all the patio. Just try to keep busy to stay off the thing.”*

(Young man, Cardiff)

- Young men in prison report that their offending is more likely to be related to alcohol misuse (52 per cent) rather than drug misuse (43 per cent).
- Nearly 90 per cent discussed how violence and involvement in fighting was part of their everyday lives.
- Nearly half of those who linked their offending to alcohol misuse identified drugs as problematic for them.<sup>37</sup>

## 5 Improving the treatment of young adults with substance and alcohol problems

Young adults in the criminal justice system have a particularly high problem usage of drugs and alcohol. Problem drug use in young people is most prevalent among those who have been through the criminal justice system, those who have been in care, and those who have played truant or been excluded from school. Research indicates that this young adult age group is most likely to drink to excess and most likely to be involved in crime and disorder.<sup>38</sup> The link between crime and drug taking is complex – many of the same risk factors that lead to drug addiction also lead to offending.

The average onset ages for truancy and crime are almost 14 and 14.5 respectively while 16 is the onset age for drugs generally and nearly 20 for hard drugs. 18 - 20 is also the age group, when a significant amount of violent crime linked to alcohol misuse happens. While there is no straightforward causal relationship between the two this does mean that young adulthood is a particularly important time to address drug and alcohol misuse in a way which takes account of the maturity, lifestyle, background and experience of the individual. Evidence from a systematic review has shown that younger people are more responsive to interventions than older people.<sup>39</sup>

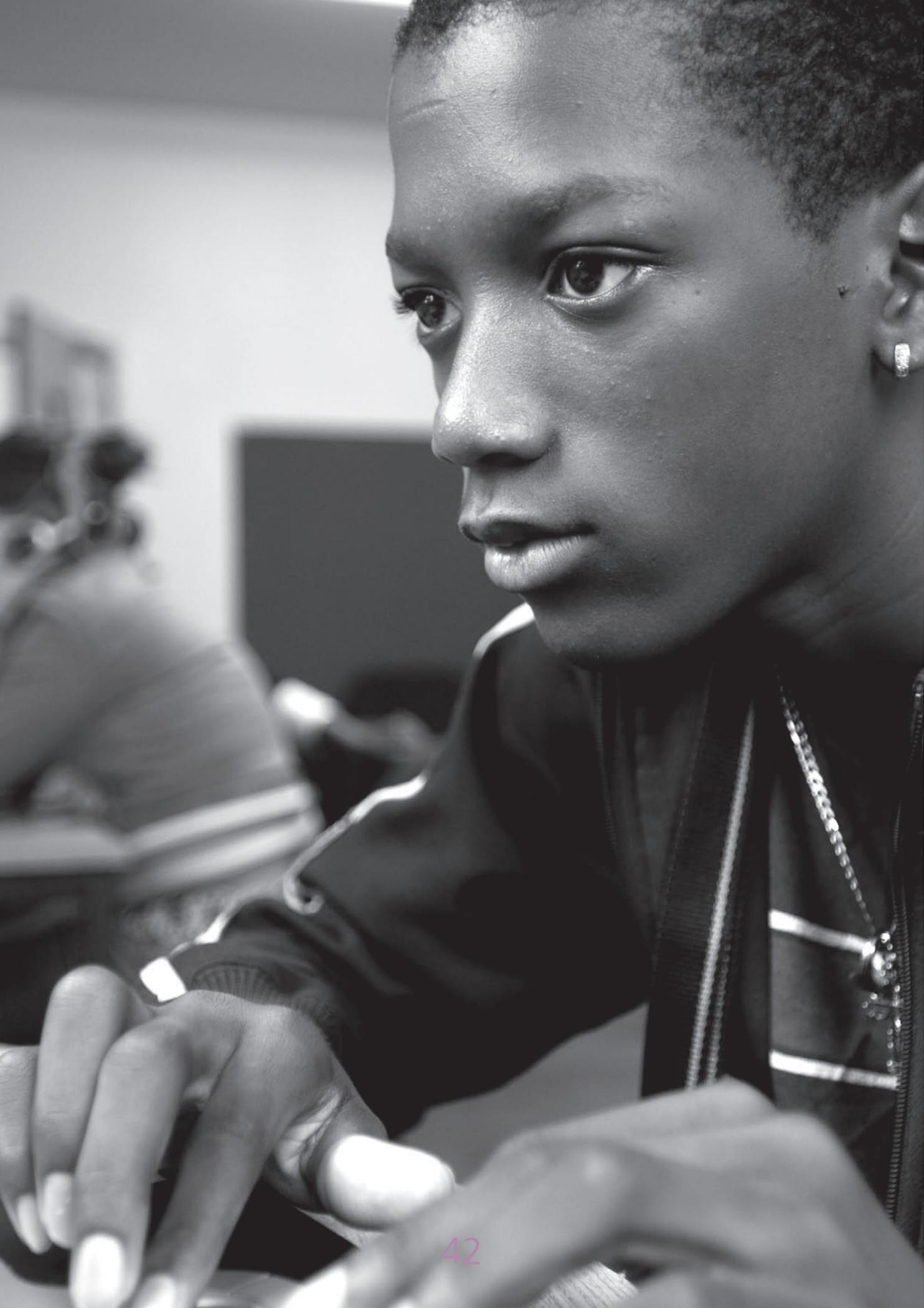
Young adults with substance and alcohol misuse problems are liable to fall into the gap between youth and adult treatment services. Drug (and Alcohol) Action Teams are required to produce ‘Young People’s Plans’ to set out how they intend to meet the target on reducing drug use among young people. Remarkably, though the National Strategy defines young people as ‘under 25’, the Teams in England are only required to produce a plan for young people up to the age of 19. In Wales however, the ‘Tackling Substance Misuse in Wales Strategy’ (also based on the National Strategy) defines young people up to the age of 25.

In some places a protocol on when and how a young person should be transferred to adult services has been developed. In the London Borough of Wandsworth for example, ‘transition’ does not just mean a formal transfer between services but a consideration by drug-workers of the appropriateness of the treatment concerned. Therefore an 18 year old may be placed in adult or in youth treatment services depending on their individual need.

Protocols such as Wandsworth’s should be replicated across Drug (and Alcohol) Action Teams in England and Wales and should include a particular ‘pathway option’ – developing guidelines for who should be referred to whom – for young adults in the criminal justice system.

Reflecting the arbitrary division between the youth justice system and the adult criminal justice system, the National Offender Management Service’s Drug Strategy boldly asserts that “The needs of drug-misusing offenders who are under 18 are very different from those of adults.” The Commission and many drug workers do not necessarily concur with this view. There may be little difference between the treatment needs of a 19 year old and a 17 year old.

Young adults in the criminal justice system have distinct needs that should be addressed. Assistance with substance and alcohol addictions are only two of such potential needs. The findings from the Crime and Justice Survey<sup>40</sup> about vulnerable young people imply strongly that substance misuse is rarely the only problem that young people face, but instead is often related to a variety of other problems that require a holistic response.<sup>41</sup>



Development of practice in treating young adults with substance and alcohol misuse problems should take into account the practice currently being developed by the Youth Justice Board for under-18

year olds in custody. Practice should also take into account the multiple and individual needs of young adults in the criminal justice system.

### Recommendation 5 Improve access to addiction treatment for young adults

The Commission recommends:

- > Protocols on transition between youth and adult services should be developed at local level by Drug (and Alcohol) Action Teams.
- > Prison drug treatment teams should work with the National Offender Management Service, the Department of Health and the National Treatment Agency to find the best way of working with young adults with drug problems in the criminal justice system.

*“Prisons are getting better at it. But learning difficulties are not well picked up. The skills are spasmodic and it depends on the individual. There is no automatic screening.”*  
(Voluntary organisation in Birmingham)

- >72 per cent of young adults in custody have been excluded from school at some time.
- >25 per cent of young adults in custody have left full-time education by the age of 14.
- >63 per cent of young adults in custody are unemployed at the point of arrest (compared to under 46 per cent of those aged 25 and over).
- >Two thirds of prisoners lose their jobs while in prison.
- >67 per cent of prisoners in the four weeks before imprisonment are unemployed compared to 5 per cent in the general population.<sup>42</sup>

### Learning Prisons: The 21st Century Prison

An inter-disciplinary team including architects and educationalists working in partnership with the Prison Service recently presented a case for radical prison reform based around modernised roles for prison officers and an ethos of education. Their model had four key objectives: to maintain high security, enable a quality learning programme, free-up staff time and reduce capital and maintenance costs. Groups of prisoners would be accommodated in ‘houses’ or small communities. Staff time spent on surveillance and escorting prisoners would be cut by reducing the number of overall movements on the prison site. Learning facilities would be at the heart of the building within easy 24 hour reach of all prisoners. Each house would have an immediate link to the outside, mitigating the time and cost associated with the need to spend time in the open air. As well as educational knowledge, the prison would teach physical, emotional, intellectual, social (domestic activities within the house) and vocational skills.

## 6 Education, employment and training and young adults

Finding stable and satisfying work is an important part of making the transition to adulthood. It can also be critical in helping young adults to grow out of crime by giving them a legitimate income and stability in their lives. Young adults in general are twice as likely to be unemployed as those aged over 24. However, those in the criminal justice system face additional difficulties. There is some evidence that young adult prisoners (between the ages of 18 and 21) have worse educational histories than older prisoners. Many lack qualifications, training and experience – while their criminal record can deter employers even if they have appropriate skills. Young adults who spoke to the Commission told us that the disappointment of being rejected for a job was made worse after receiving training because it was made clear that they had been rejected solely on account of their convictions. The evidence collected by the Commission shows the need to improve basic skills. It also has shown the inadequacy of education in prison and the need for wider training in prisons and support in the community.

Although basic skills are acquired early in life, there is substantial variation in adult attainment that can be explained by individual life experiences – at home, at work and in leisure life.<sup>43</sup> Young people who grow up with poor basic skills are up to five times more likely to be unemployed and far more likely to have low-paid, low-skilled jobs than those with adequate basic skills. They are also more prone to ill health and social exclusion.<sup>44</sup> Persistent law breaking between the ages of 18 and 30 is associated with poor education histories that make finding a job difficult. It is not just the problem of crime, the government estimates the cost to individuals and society over the lifetime, of not being in education, training or employment between the ages of 16 and 18, at £15.1 billion.<sup>45</sup>

### Education in custody for young adult offenders

One of the government’s key priorities is that people should be given the opportunity to learn and gain skills. Common complaints about prison education include long waiting lists and a lack of suitable courses.<sup>46</sup> Many prisoners are already discouraged

by their experiences of formal education and lack the self-confidence to take it up again. Others may have undetected learning difficulties.

Some are put off by the fact that they can earn more by working in prison than by attending classes. On top of these formidable obstacles, overcrowding, short-term prison sentences, and moving prisoners from prison to prison disrupt education. The Select Committee on Education and Skills has warned that without a strong commitment to reduce overcrowding and ‘churn’ it will be difficult to achieve improvements in education in prison.

Though a high proportion of prisoners of all ages are in need of education, the focus should be on young adults who still have time to do something with their lives. Young adults are at a point in their lives when criminal convictions can do significant damage to their future prospects. There are international precedents for successful intervention. An intervention in Canadian prisons attempted to break the link between poor basic skills and offending and found that it was most effective in reducing recidivism among younger offenders.

*“And when you say you’re a criminal they’re like, I don’t know about that, they say you can’t work here. Sometimes it just gets you down and then you end up going out robbing. When you’ve been to five different interviews and they’ve gone ‘we don’t need you cos you can’t do this’ then you think, ‘f\*\*\* you all then, f\*\*\* the system.’”*

(Young unemployed man, Cardiff)

*“It’s an offence not to disclose a criminal record so you can hardly get a job – everyone I know who hasn’t got a record has a job whilst those with a record aren’t working.”*

(Young man, Cardiff)

### Young adults and difficulties with learning

It is not just a lack of basic skills that hold back young adults. Organisations have submitted evidence to the Commission that shows that undiagnosed learning difficulties in young adults hamper their education at school and prevent them gaining basic skills in prison classes.

Increasingly it is recognised that learning difficulties at school can begin a cycle of behavioural problems, school exclusion, and crime. A lack of basic skills and an inability to read social signals can also mean that young adults with learning difficulties are easily led by peer groups already involved in law-breaking. The support that derives from a statement of educational need at school age ceases to apply post-school. Education or training places may be unsuitable or unsupported. Many of those with learning difficulties could learn skills and make good employees but the levels of support needed to reach that stage are currently lacking.<sup>47</sup>

Young adults may also have developmental writing disorders, developmental arithmetic disorders, or other motor skills disorders that do not meet the criteria for a specific learning disability. C-FAR (The Centre for Adolescent Rehabilitation) told us of several students they had taught with extensive motor skills problems that led to frustration and difficulties in learning. The Centre also test eyesight, because they have discovered that poor eyesight, which has been previously undiagnosed can contribute to many learning difficulties among their students.

### Employing young adults with criminal convictions

Because young adulthood is such a crucial period where the transition from education to the workplace takes place, youthful offending can harm the life chances of an ex-offender forever. Young adults who have engaged in youthful offending need to be given a chance to improve their lives directly by policies which improve their ability to find a job.

Young adults in the criminal justice system already face difficulties due to their generally poor educational histories and lack of qualifications. These are compounded by particular problems in entering the labour market. Black and minority ethnic young adults with criminal convictions are doubly disadvantaged in finding work since Britain’s ethnic minorities have consistently experienced unemployment rates twice those of white people.<sup>48</sup>

There is strong evidence that the most effective way of getting low-skilled young people into permanent employment is to enable them to experience some form of employment or work experience.<sup>49</sup> Young adults in the criminal justice system often lack the work history that is so crucial to finding a job. Currently employers may offer an unpaid work experience scheme for only two weeks before young people lose their benefit. For young adults with no experience of the workplace this is not enough. Getting adjusted to regular working hours will usually take longer than two weeks for those who have experienced disadvantage and spells in custody. The Department for Work and Pensions is currently running a pilot scheme with Marks & Spencers, ‘Marks and Start’, which gives participants a four-week period of work experience before loss of benefits.

The government acknowledges that being in employment can reduce offending by between a third and a half.<sup>50</sup> Yet it is not enough just to have any job. Studies have identified that it is stable and high quality employment that is associated with reducing reoffending.<sup>51</sup> Work that is adequately paid and offers the potential for career advancement should be the goal for offenders.

An unpublished Home Office study found that over half those looking for work said they had experienced trouble in finding employment due to their criminal record. This may especially affect young adults who have little or no work experience and poor qualifications.



One study found that half of employers routinely asked job candidates about convictions. Three quarters would treat candidates less favourably if they were aware they had a criminal record.

And one in seven would ask and then reject candidates with a positive criminal record, regardless of the nature of the offence.<sup>52</sup>

## Recommendation 6 Improve educational and employment opportunities for young adult offenders

The Commission recommends:

- > Young adults under the age of 23 (the age at which a substantial amount of desistance combined with the transition to adulthood has occurred) should not be required to disclose criminal convictions to employers (with certain exceptions such as convictions for sexual or violent offences).
- > Young adults in custody should be given a chance to take part in learning programmes and gain the skills they need and qualifications that are comparable to those in mainstream education. The Offender Learning and Skills Strategy, produced by the Department for Education and Skills, should highlight how the educational needs of young adults differ from those of older adults and younger people.
- > There should be joint training between Youth Offending Teams and the National Offender Management Service in recognising the full range of learning difficulties in young adults. Regional Offender Managers should commission good practice work for all young adults with learning difficulties.
- > The Department for Work and Pensions should lengthen the time that young adults can spend on unpaid work experience to six weeks before they lose benefits.



*“People who are homeless are more likely to be reconvicted. But up to a third of prisoners lose their housing during custody. This is often caused by Housing Benefit policy or poor communication with housing providers.”* (Social Exclusion Unit, Reducing Re-offending by Ex-Prisoners, 2002)

A recent Home Office study<sup>53</sup> interviewed 160 homeless young people aged 25 and under and found that:

- >95 per cent had used drugs.
- >17 per cent were problem drug users.
- >14 per cent had been problem-users in the past.
- >Almost 25 per cent had over-dosed on drugs and alcohol.
- >Substance misuse was given as reason for leaving home in half of cases (although not always problem misuse). Other reasons were family conflict and abuse.
- >Many faced multiple barriers when trying to get temporary or permanent accommodation.
- >70 per cent had been diagnosed with depression or other mental health problems.
- >95 per cent had committed an offence.
- >Many had also been victims of crime.

## 7 Housing young adults

Secure and safe accommodation is the bedrock enabling young adults to break their cycle of involvement in the criminal justice system. Without a secure roof over their heads, young adults find it harder to access essential services, find a job, education or training, or achieve the confidence to make a successful transition to adulthood. An estimated 250 000 16 to 25 year olds each year experience at least one episode of homelessness.

Accommodation is a problem for all prisoners. A third of prisoners are not in permanent accommodation prior to imprisonment. But young adults in the criminal justice system face particular difficulties. Young adults are unlikely to be living at home with their families since 49 per cent of those in prison have come from a background in care. Young ex-offenders generally find renting private housing difficult, and they are often in need of extensive support for drug addiction and mental health problems. Housing may be a particular issue for certain groups. Black and minority ethnic young adults who have been in custody face difficulties as they are three times more likely to be homeless than their white counterparts. For young women, fewer prisons mean that women are more likely to be held further from home making it harder to maintain good links with housing providers; and half of all women prisoners have dependent children.

If a young person is sentenced to imprisonment without making arrangements about their accommodation while they are in custody, they will often accumulate arrears and find themselves barred from future tenancies. In turn, this affects their benefits and ability to find accommodation on release. Similarly, if a young person goes into custody from accommodation without arrangements to deal with their belongings, many private landlords will dispose of their property.

### Housing benefit

A significant barrier to improving the situation for young adults is that housing benefit rules introduced in 1996 entitle young people under the age of 25 to less housing benefit than older adults. While it is an accepted principle that housing benefit

should meet reasonable rents, it is deemed appropriate for single childless applicants under the age of 25 to live in single-room accommodation with a shared kitchen and toilet. Recent research from the Department for Work and Pensions found that nearly 87 per cent of those covered under this regulation faced a shortfall in paying the rent compared with 56 per cent of those who are not subject to the regulation (i.e. older adults).<sup>54</sup> Young people aged 18 to 24 are also entitled to less Job Seekers Allowance if they are not in work, and young people aged up to 21 a lower level of the National Minimum Wage, if they are in work. This can make it difficult for young adults to afford their housing, manage their budgets and escape crime. The Commission heard much anecdotal evidence that the single room rent regulations make private landlords reluctant to house young adults.

### Prioritising young adults on resettlement from prison

The Social Exclusion Unit has found that ex-offenders leaving prison are difficult to house. Given the problems young adults in general face in finding independent accommodation, this makes young adults leaving prison a group at particular risk of being homeless. Up to a third of prisoners lose their housing due to imprisonment on going into custody – often due to a loss of housing benefit.<sup>55</sup>

Young adults can rarely maintain private tenancies by themselves even if they are accepted for them. Currently, many hostels and supported housing schemes will not, for example, accept those with alcohol or drug addictions. Well-established organisations do not accept referrals for those with drug addictions in order to protect other clients in need of their help.

### Shelter Prison Link Cymru (PLC)

Shelter Cymru and Tai Thothwy established a prison link service in 2004 to provide a coordinated service to all local authorities in Wales to ensure that they receive information on homeless prisoners due to be discharged to their area. Prisoners are then rehoused or given support on release. Shelter operates in four Welsh prisons and five English prisons (including Stoke Heath Young Offender Institution). 'Long arm' links with other English prisons to identify Welsh residents on the verge of release are also due to be established. The organisation offers interviews to all prisoners who are anticipating returning to Wales and being homeless on discharge, assists prisoners with their applications for benefits, and carries out housing risk assessments where appropriate. It will also monitor the housing outcomes for released prisoners in the scheme. Prison Link Cymru was established with a grant from the Welsh Assembly.

While the Homelessness Act 2002 confers duties on local authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area and formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based on local consultation of that review's findings, young people are not currently given priority under housing legislation or local authority strategies.<sup>56</sup> Local authorities are not statutorily obliged to meet the needs

of those aged 18 or over unless they are covered by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. In Wales, under the terms of the 2001 Homelessness Priority Needs Order, there is a duty on local authorities to house all prisoners on release from prison to their local area.

### Recommendation 7 Improve housing for young adults

The Commission recommends:

- The amount of housing benefit to which a young person under the age of 25 is entitled to should be raised to the same level accorded to those over the age of 25.
- A statutory duty should be placed on local authorities in England as currently happens in Wales, to house ex-prisoners on their release. While ideally this requirement would be extended in England to all ex-prisoners, this initially should be piloted with young adults leaving prison, as they are a particularly vulnerable group and should be prioritised.

*“Young people with severe or multiple needs in areas such as homelessness, substance misuse, offending or mental health will need access to a range of services in order to address the range of problems. But too often services will approach individual issues rather than looking at them as interlinked. As a result, individuals can find themselves pushed from pillar to post on unpredictable and repetitive journeys around different agencies and on a downward spiral of social exclusion. Such people will struggle to progress into independent, fulfilling adulthood.”* (Social Exclusion Unit, 2005, Transitions, A Social Exclusion Unit interim report on young adults)

One study which examined service provision for 18 - 24 year olds identified certain barriers:<sup>57</sup>

- Lack of access or knowledge about services available on the part of young adults.
- Lack of appropriate and tailored services for young adults.
- The transience and vulnerability of this group.
- Young adults are less dependent on their families helping them to gain access to the public services they need, at a time when there can often be a greater need for provision.
- There are large-scale gaps in data collected by local authorities, which is needed in order to provide adequate services for young adults.

## 8 Health and social care for young adults

During the period of transition to adulthood, young adults need to start accessing services themselves rather than through the help of their parents or care workers. A Prince’s Trust survey of 900 young people including those unemployed, educational underachievers, ex-offenders and serving prisoners, and those in or leaving care, found that 92 per cent of 14 to 25 year olds believe that there are significant gaps in the provision of basic services in their community. Commission evidence found that young adults in the criminal justice system have extensive needs that service providers are not meeting. This is because of the vertical gaps in provision between youth and adult services; the horizontal gaps between different service providers when young adults often have multiple needs; and the problems that young people making difficult transitions to adulthood find in accessing services. One study found that young adults were a low priority for service providers as they are difficult to work with and do not keep appointments.<sup>58</sup>

The new Children’s Trusts will have responsibility for planning and commissioning services for children and young people up to the age of 18. From April 2006, local authorities will be required to publish a three-year Children and Young People’s Plan. This will not include planning how the vertical transition between youth and adult services should be managed.

Young people often have a cluster of problems that require several agencies to work together simultaneously. Young adults often present with one problem that masks more underlying difficulties. For a young person, the most immediate practical problems, such as a lack of secure housing, may be a manifestation of more complex emotional problems.

The recent Youth Matters Green Paper (July 2005), published by the Department for Education and Skills, recommends the increasing integration of service provision where possible, and the development of lead professional roles to help young people navigate specialist services. Although the transition between youth and adult services is contained within the overall ‘vision’ of the paper, the diagnosis does not result in practical solutions.

Marginalised young adults, who lack maturity and family support, will often not access services even where they are available to them. They may not know, or be incapable of finding out, about such services. The Prince’s Trust found that 14 to 25 year olds preferred informal contacts such as family or friends and were unlikely to seek the help of either statutory or voluntary sector support networks. The mobility of young adults presents a challenge in providing support: 43 per cent of 18 to 25 year olds have been at their current address for less than a year, and a further 20 per cent for less than three years.<sup>59</sup>

Service providers can lack the skills to communicate with young people in a way that builds trust and co-operation. Interviews with professionals, conducted by the New Policy Institute, suggested that they can regard young adults as a poor investment because their chaotic lifestyles and time-keeping result in missed appointments.

### Connected Care Centres – a model for deprived communities

In 2004 the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) and the charity Turning Point published a joint report arguing that the current approach to social care provision is costly for the taxpayer and unsuccessful. It claimed those with the most complex support needs are being ‘failed by the system’.

Instead it proposed Connected Care Centres, based on the personalised services that have been pioneered through the Sure Start scheme. A local needs audit during the commissioning process would inform how the centres would work in each area. The authors assert that this model would close the gap between social care solutions and social inclusion strategies. Centres would have a visible presence in the local community and staff would be tasked with ‘assertive outreach’ work to target those who are unable or unwilling to access services. A pilot is currently underway in Hartlepool, with a second planned in Manchester.

### Developing a ‘one-stop shop’ for young adults

The Prince’s Trust and the New Policy Institute asked young adults what type of services they are likely to access and what kind of tailored approach suits them. Overwhelmingly, they called for a one-stop shop that could direct them towards appropriate help. Over 80 per cent of young adults who were surveyed by the Prince’s Trust liked this idea. Forty-nine per cent of young adults who spoke to the Prince’s Trust also said they would rather seek help and advice from a voluntary sector organisation, than from a statutory agency, and only 20 per cent of those interviewed disagreed with this.

43 per cent said they would trust a volunteer more than someone who is paid.

An open-access one-stop shop for young adults with advice and advocacy workers on housing, independent living skills, the criminal justice system, education and careers advice should be piloted in local communities. Each young adult could be assigned a key worker responsible for following through his or her case. This personal approach would be welcomed: the Prince’s Trust survey found that over three quarters of young adults would like someone from a service provider to keep in touch following initial support. Nearly 80 per cent said they would like to speak to the same person each time they came in contact with a support organisation.

### Recommendation 8 Improve access to health and social care for young adults

The Commission recommends:

- Local service providers should be required to undertake ‘needs assessments’ for young adults in their area. Provision of appropriate services as well as transition from youth services should be considered.
- The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills, Department of Work and Pensions and the Home Office should provide joint funding to establish a pilot model of ‘one-stop shops’ offering support services for young adults. These should include access to a personal adviser who is able to help the young person navigate the services available.

# 9 Measuring social outcomes in the criminal justice system

## Learning Curve

The Learning Curve project is based in the south side of Birmingham and provides educational, welfare, training, information and advice and guidance to Black and minority ethnic youngsters. Some of its initiatives are tailored for 16 – 24 year olds engaged in gun crime. Others tackle anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and sexual health. Each programme is delivered using a variety of techniques including one to one support, detached outreach, and drama workshops. Specific initiatives such as 'Stop and Search' are aimed at educating young people about their rights if the police stop them.

The project measures its impact on the journey of the young person by setting individual goals at the beginning of the programme. A 'SMART' analysis is applied to gauge their strengths, weaknesses and the risks they face. This is reviewed every three months to track the 'distance travelled'.

The range of social, economic and environmental factors which underpin or lead to offending or desistance is well known. The success or otherwise of the criminal justice system and its component parts is at present measured mainly by reconviction rates. This is a far from perfect measure of re-offending and can obscure other positive social outcomes of programmes and interventions which may present a more accurate picture.

Reconviction rates are equally a measure of police performance in catching an individual, and of the courts in convicting those who have re-offended. They do not measure whether someone has reduced the level or seriousness of their offending.<sup>60</sup> Programmes or interventions of any kind often fail to show any impact on reconviction rates due to the small numbers of young people progressing through or completing the programme. This may particularly be the case for voluntary and community sector projects which are contracted to work with criminal justice organisations. This risks giving a false impression that 'nothing works' and ignores any potential positive social outcomes.

Voluntary and community sector projects which work with young adults rarely have the sole or main objective of their work as reducing reconviction rates (unless this is stipulated by the funder), but instead aim to improve some aspect of young adults' life skills or life chances. These may be social outcomes (perhaps gaining a more positive peer network, greater social or civic participation and resulting improvements in social capital), economic outcomes (perhaps gaining a job or developing new skills which can enhance the individual's ability to gain a job), or environmental outcomes (perhaps gaining safe and secure accommodation). These outcomes are largely not currently measured, but should be in order to ascertain a true picture of the success of the intervention.

Other individual social outcomes that could be measured are: the development of organisational and interpersonal skills, increased confidence and motivation, improved self-esteem, greater willingness to take responsibility, higher personal aspirations, or developments in communication skills. Quantifiable outcomes, such as engagement in future education, training or employment should also be measured.

Lessons and methodologies should be shared between organisations and other government departments which have already worked on developing more sensitive ways of measuring success. At the level of the individual, monitoring the distance travelled – how far the individual journey towards individual goals has been travelled – is particularly appropriate for young adults. This method recognises the individual needs and starting points of young adults. It can also contextualise the individual factors. For example measuring numbers of young adults who gain employment following a job skills course should take into account the amount and type of employment available in the local area. Measuring distance travelled can prevent someone being labelled a failure and it can be motivating for young people to have their progress recognised. Possessing a portfolio of progress can also be a useful tool to show potential employers when a young person does not possess formal qualifications.



The criminal justice system with all its component parts should be measured on its ability to improve the desistance of young adults from offending. The key aims of all interventions, projects and work with young adults should include objectives to improve the life skills and life chances of young adults.

The criminal justice system needs to assess both the contribution and equally, the negative impact it can have on the life chances of young adults as well as the extent to which the criminal justice system helps or hinders young adults growing out of crime.

### Recommendation 9 Develop better measures of success

The Commission recommends:

>The current focus on reconviction rates as the main measure of success in the criminal justice system hinders the development of good practice and obscures other factors which contribute to re-offending or desistance. Improvements in life chances and life skills should instead be monitored as more accurate measurements of success. The criminal justice system should be measured and judged on its ability to promote improvements in social outcomes for young adults and desistance from crime.

# Summary of Recommendations

## Recommendation 1 Develop a unified criminal justice system and T2A Teams

>Using age as the arbitrary division between youth and adult criminal justice systems is unwise and prevents sensible approaches for dealing with well-understood problems of young adult offenders. In the long term, a unified criminal justice system should be developed which removes the need for two separate systems and which enables interventions to be tailored to the maturity and needs of the individual.

>As an interim but immediate transitional arrangement, Transition to Adulthood Teams (T2A Teams) should be established in every local criminal justice area to take responsibility for young adults in the criminal justice system. T2A Teams should comprise representatives from the National Offender Management Service, Youth Offending Teams, Connexions, Drug (and Alcohol) Action Teams, local authorities and the independent and voluntary sector. A National T2A Champion should be appointed with strategic oversight of local teams.

>T2A Teams and the T2A Champion should give special attention to the needs and special circumstances of young Black and minority ethnic adults. This should include ongoing scrutiny of programmes and policies to ensure they do not treat young Black and minority ethnic adults with disproportionate severity and sustained efforts are made to develop culturally appropriate interventions for distinct groups of young adult offenders.

>T2A Teams should also pay special attention to young adult female offenders. Though a small percentage of young adult offenders, young women in the criminal justice system have distinct problems and needs, ranging from caring for dependent children, to being in abusive relationships, to having a high likelihood of mental health problems. They need to be offered more effective support within the criminal justice system and especially in custody.

## Recommendation 2 Take into account age and maturity of young adults when sentencing

>Sentencers should be required to take into account the age, emotional maturity of the individual and the nature of the crime of young adults. Specialists in the National Offender Management Service should give an assessment of an offender's maturity to the court. Sentencers should also be given training in youth issues.

>There should always be a strong presumption against custody for young adults. As most young offenders stop offending at age 23, it would make sense to require sentencers to refrain from imposing custody in all but the most serious cases until after then.

>Young adults convicted of first time or minor offences should be diverted away from the criminal justice system wherever possible through the use of conditional cautions or the extension of youth offender panels.

## Recommendation 3 Improve the policing of young adults

>The Independent Police Complaints Commission and Home Office Stop and Search Action Team should convene an Advisory Group of young adults in order to enter an ongoing dialogue about policing of young people, in particular highlighting the disproportionate impact of policing on Black and minority ethnic young adults.

>Police should develop local community forums for engaging with young adults to develop non-discriminatory policing practices towards youth, and to enable them to influence policing priorities and strategies. The forum should be used to share local 'Section 95' statistics on race and the criminal justice system, and to publicise the complaints procedure. The forums should use community mediators.

## Recommendation 4 Target mental health services on young adults

>Each primary care trust should have a strategy for young adults with mental health care needs, including within the criminal justice system. The National Offender Management Service with the Department of Health should consider how young adults with mental health problems can be identified and diverted away from custody where possible.

>Particular attention should be paid to Black and minority ethnic young adults, a group over-represented in both the criminal justice system and in mental health care. This group should be fully represented in all relevant crosscutting documents and strategies – including the Offender Mental Health Care Pathway, and Delivering Race Equality in Mental Health Care.

## Recommendation 5 Improve access to addiction treatment for young adults

>Protocols on transition between youth and adult services should be developed at local level by Drug (and Alcohol) Action Teams.

>Prison drug treatment teams should work with the National Offender Management Service, the Department of Health and the National Treatment Agency to find the best way of working with young adults with drug problems in the criminal justice system.

## Recommendation 6 Improve educational and employment opportunities for young adult offenders

>Young adults under the age of 23 (the age at which a substantial amount of desistance combined with the transition to adulthood has occurred) should not be required to disclose criminal convictions to employers (with certain exceptions such as sexual or violent offences).

>Young adults in custody should be given a chance to take part in learning programmes and gain the skills they need and qualifications that are comparable to those in mainstream education. The Offender Learning and Skills Strategy, produced by the Department for Education and Skills, should highlight how the educational needs of young adults differ from those of older adults and younger people.

>There should be joint training between Youth Offending Teams and the National Offender Management Service in recognising the full range of learning difficulties in young adults. Regional Offender Managers should commission good practice work for all young adults with learning difficulties.

>The Department for Work and Pensions should lengthen the time that young adults can spend on unpaid work experience to six weeks before they lose benefits.

## Recommendation 7 Improve housing for young adults

>The amount of housing benefit to which a young person under the age of 25 is entitled to should be raised to the same level accorded to those over the age of 25s.

>A statutory duty should be placed on local authorities in England, as currently happens in Wales, to house ex-prisoners on their release. While ideally this requirement would be extended in England to all ex-prisoners, this initially should be piloted with young adults leaving prison, as they are a particularly vulnerable group and should be prioritised.

## Recommendation 8 Improve access to health and social care for young adults

>Local service providers should be required to undertake 'needs assessments' for young adults in their area. Provision of appropriate services as well as transition from youth services should be considered.

>The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills, Department of Work and Pensions and the Home Office should provide joint funding to establish a pilot model of 'one stop' shops offering support services for young adults. These should include access to a personal adviser who is able to help the young person navigate the services available.

## Recommendation 9 Develop better measures of success

>The current focus on reconviction rates as the main measure of success in the criminal justice system hinders the development of good practice and obscures other factors which contribute to reoffending or desistance. Improvements in life chances and life skills should instead be monitored as more accurate measurements. The criminal justice system should be measured and judged on its ability to promote improvements in social outcomes for young adults and desistance from crime.

# Notes

1 Jones, G (2002) The Youth Divide: Diverging paths to adulthood, JRF Young People Programme, York: YPS.

2 Bynner J and Londra M (2004) The impact of government policy on social exclusion among young people: A review of the literature for the Social Exclusion Unit in the Breaking the Cycle series. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister .

3 Webster C, et al (2004) Poor transitions: Social exclusion and young adults, JRF, The Policy Press.

4 Mac an Ghaill M and Haywood C (2003): Young Bangladeshi People's Experience of Transition to Adulthood.

5 Offending rates peak in the middle teenage years and decline steadily until only a small percentage of offenders continue into their late twenties. This happens whether or not offences came to the attention of the criminal justice system and can be thought of as 'natural' desistance. As people grow up, they tend to reduce or give up foolish, dangerous, and stigmatising behaviour. Among people who remain active offenders into their early twenties, the most common triggers of desistance are entering into a stable relationship, gaining a foothold on to a legitimate livelihood, and experiencing a spiritual awakening such as 'finding God.' That involvement in crime declines with age is one of the oldest and most widely accepted findings in criminology. Professor David Farrington of Cambridge University, in a classic 1986 article drawing on US and English data over a half-century, showed that offending peaks in the middle and late teenage years. Offending rates for non-violent crimes peak occur earlier, at ages 16-17, and for violence slightly later, at 18-20. Offending after these peak ages declines sharply for non-violent crimes, halving by the early twenties, and somewhat less sharply but still substantially for violent crimes.

6 Figures provided by Reseach, Development and Statistics (RDS), Home Office.

7 The Coulsfield Inquiry into Alternatives to Custody funded by the Rethinking Crime and Punishment programme (Esmee Fairburn Foundation), headed by Lord Coulsfield concluded that: "We believe that there is a strong case for the government to look at the offending characteristics of 18 – 20 year olds and consider running some pilot projects aimed at establishing whether the Youth Justice Board is more effective for these young people than current arrangements."

8 The delivery of national action points is overseen by a cross-government board of senior officials, chaired by the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service, and including representatives from key government departments responsible for complementary services. Each area is currently required to have a regional rehabilitation strategy in place where key stakeholders are identified to map current provision.

9 Home Office, (1999) Suicide is Everyone's Concern, A Thematic Review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Home Office, London.

10 RDS, (2003) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, Table 8.11.

11 Due to be introduced for 16 and 17 year olds from 2007.

12 Referral orders are given to 10 – 17 year olds who plead guilty to a first time conviction, unless the charge is serious enough to warrant custody.

13 Home Office, (1999) Suicide is Everyone's Concern, A Thematic Review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Home Office, London.

14 Solomon E, (2004), A Lost Generation: The Experiences of Young People in Prison, Prison Reform Trust. London.

15 Carter P, (2003), Managing Offenders, Reducing Crime: A New Approach, Strategy Unit. London.

16 Social Exclusion Unit (2002), Reducing Reoffending by Ex-Prisoners, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London.

17 Ibid.

18 Audit Commission (2004) Youth Justice 2004: A Review of the Reformed Youth Justice System.

19 Published in March 2005.

20 Cited in Allison E, Young Inmates at Risk in Victorian Jail, The Guardian, June 2, 2005.

21 See Solomon E, (2004) A Lost Generation: The Experiences of Young People in Prison, Prison Reform Trust, London. Some prisoners were having to use in-cell toilets in front of their cell-mates and also had to eat their meals in the same room. After eating their meal, some had to use the washbasin to clean their plate and utensils.

22 This has been the case since 1953 when a reform to the law provided for the application of juvenile law if "a global examination of the offender's personality and of his social environment indicates that at the time of committing the crime the young adult in his moral and psychological development was like a juvenile" or if the motives and the circumstances are those of a typical juvenile crime.

23 RDS, (2003) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, Table 8.7 Home Office.

24 RDS, (2003) Offender Management Caseload Statistics, Table 4.14 Home Office.

25 It is not possible to ascertain exactly how many young adults currently in the adult system have previously been convicted when under 18 as the Home Office does not systematically collate this data.

26 After a referral order is handed down by the court, the young person is referred to the youth offender panel (YOP) which draws up a 'contract' with him or her. The contract usually involves a reparative element.

27 Figures provided by Research Development and Statistics (RDS), Home Office.

28 Home Office (2005), Section 95: Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System, 2004, London.

29 The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry found that racial stereotyping informed policing.

30 Home Office (2005), Section 95: Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System, 2004, London.

31 Local Section 95 figures on race and the criminal justice system were not made available to the Commission despite repeated requests. Section 95 of the 1991 Criminal Justice Act requires the Home Office to make these figures publicly available.

32 Office of National Statistics, (1997) Department of Health, Psychiatric Morbidity of Prisoners in England and Wales.

33 Audit Commission (2004) Youth Justice 2004: A Review of the Reformed Youth Justice System.

34 Hagell A, (2001), The Mental Health of Young Offenders, Bright Futures: Working with Vulnerable Young People, Mental Health Foundation, London. The study reported that young people were being 'passed around' services and highlighted the lack of provision for 16 – 25 year olds.

35 Home Office, (1999) Suicide is Everyone's Concern, A Thematic Review by HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales, Home Office, London.

36 See Street C, (2005) Minority Voices: Research into the access and acceptability of services for the mental health of young people from Black and minority ethnic groups. Young Minds, London.

37 Howard League for Penal Reform, (2005), Out for Good: Research Briefing 1.

38 Ibid.

39 Holloway et al (2005), The Effectiveness of criminal justice and treatment programmes in reducing drug-related crime: A Systematic Review.

40 Drug use among vulnerable groups of young people: findings from the 2003 Crime and Justice Survey: Home Office.

41 Home Office Research Study 272, Wincup et al (2003) Youth Homelessness and Substance Use: report to the drugs and alcohol research unit.

42 Social Exclusion Unit (2002), Reducing Reoffending by Ex-Prisoners, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London.

43 Bynner J, (2004) Role of Basic Skills in Offending and in the Rehabilitation of Offenders, Paper presented to the European Offender Employment Forum conference on 'Basic Skills for Offenders', Paris, March 4-6, 1999. Basic skills can be defined as functional literacy and numeracy – the ability to use words and numbers to achieve tasks necessary in everyday life.

44 Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, (2003) Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market: Final Report, London.

45 This is worked out across the lifespan whereby the cost is to individuals, to families and to society. See Godfrey C et al (2002), Estimating the Cost of not being in Education, Employment or Training, DfES.

46 Often courses in prison aren't offered beyond NVQ Level 1 or 2. This is particularly an issue for Black prisoners who tend to be better educated. The Prison Reform Trust and the Howard League for Penal Reform document that courses in prisons are often just focused on improving basic skills rather than wider learning.

47 The Youth Justice Board is currently funding work in conjunction with the British Dyslexia Association to develop better screening techniques and recognition of dyslexia in under 18s, and to teach corresponding specialised learning techniques.

48 Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, (2003) Ethnic Minorities and the Labour Market: Final Report, London.

49 Dorset R, (2004) The New Deal for Young People: Effect of the options on the labour market status of young men, Policy Studies Institute.

50 See Social Exclusion Unit, (2002) Reducing Reoffending by Ex-Prisoners, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

51 Harper G et al (2004), Factors associated with offending in Harper G, and Chitty C (eds.) The impact of corrections on re-offending: a review of what works, Home Office Research Study No 291, London.

52 Cited in Social Exclusion Unit, (2002) Reducing Re-offending by Ex-Prisoners, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

53 Wincup G, et al (2003), Youth Homelessness and Substance Use: Report to the Drugs and Alcohol Research Unit, Home Office Research Study 258, Home Office, London.

54 Harvey J and Houston D, (2005) Research into the Single Room Rent Regulations, Research Report No. 243, Department for Work and Pensions.

55 Social Exclusion Unit, (2002) Reducing Re-offending by Ex-Prisoners, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, London.

56 Howarth C, and Street C, (2000) Sidelined: Young Adults' Access to Services, New Policy Institute, London.

57 Prince's Trust, (2004) Reaching the Hardest to Reach, Prince's Trust, London.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Harper G, et al (2004) Factors associated with offending in Harper G, and Chitty C (eds.) The impact of corrections on re-offending: a review of what works, Home Office Research Study No 291, London.

# Annex: Organisations consulted

Action for Prisoners' Families

Apex Trust

Birmingham Drug Action Team

Birmingham Rathbone Society

Boston Police Department

British Dyslexia Association

Central Scotland Police

Centre for Adolescent Rehabilitation (C-FAR)

Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion

Centrepoint

Community Education and Training Partnership (CETA)

Commission for Racial Equality

Concord Youth Centre, Birmingham

Crime Concern

Criminal Bar Association

Department for Education and Skills

Department of Health

Devon Fire Service

Education Unlimited

Fairbridge West

Fawcett Society

Greater London Authority

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Groundwork, Birmingham

HM Prisons Inspectorate

Home Office

Housing Justice

Howard League for Penal Reform

Institute of Criminology, Cambridge University

Islington Youth Offending Service

Learning and Skills Council

Learning Curve

London Metropolitan Police

Magistrates Association

MEL Regeneration

Mind

Nacro

National Childrens Homes

National Treatment Agency

National Youth Agency

New Hope Mentoring

Newham Monitoring Project

Northamptonshire Probation Service

Nuffield Foundation

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

Office for Public Management

Priority Youth Housing

Prison Governer's Association

Prison Reform Trust

Rainer

Redhook Community Court, New York

Rethinking Crime and Punishment (Esmee Fairburn Foundation)

Revolving Doors

Ringe Youth Prison, Denmark

Saathi House, Birmingham

Second Chance Project

Sentencing Advisory Panel

Sheffield Hallam University

Shelter

Social Market Foundation

St Basils, Birmingham

Surrey Police

Teesside University

The Children's Society

The Mental Health Foundation

The Prince's Trust

Transco

Turning Point

Voice of Aston

Wandsworth Drug Action Team

Westminster City Council

Young Disciples

Youth at Risk

Youth Justice Board

YWCA

