

Anna Gilmour provides a digest of recent research and policy developments.

Crack down at the Home Office... and policy under review

The government has announced plans to extend the presumption of prosecution for possession of a knife to all people aged 16 and over. The end to cautions for 16 and 17 year olds is intended to send a message that 'it is completely unacceptable to carry a knife', said Gordon Brown. It follows initiatives this spring to tackle knife crime through targeted police work, tackling gangs and adverts made by teenagers for their peers. The Centre's report on *Knife crime. A review of evidence and policy* (2nd edition) is available at <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/knifecrime2ndedition.html>

Latest official figures show a decline in the number of anti-social behaviour orders issued in 2006 compared to the previous year (see <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/asbos/asbos02a.xls>), however, Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith has called on police to ensure that there is 'no escape' for the 7% of persistent troublemakers involved in anti-social behaviour and public disorder; measures described by the media as 'a targeted campaign of harassment'. (*Daily Mail* 08/05/2008)

In the final lecture in the 2007/2008 New Developments in Criminal Justice lecture seminar series, Barbara Wilding, Chief Con-

stable of South Wales Police spoke of an increasing intolerance of young people, and a 'commonly held assumption that anti-social behaviour by young people can be solved by regulating behaviour'. She argue for a greater focus on prevention and less of a focus on enforcement. A copy of the speech is available at <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/speeches.html>

Following on from our examination of Labour's criminal justice performance published in 2007, CCJS has published a major analysis of the government's youth justice reforms. 'Ten years of Labour's youth justice reforms: an independent audit' by Enver Solomon and Richard Garside, examines progress against the targets set by the government and the Youth Justice Board to tackle youth offending since the reforms introduced in the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act. It argues that success has been far more mixed and ambiguous than the government often claims. On the day the report was published it received widespread coverage on BBC Today programme, where former head of the Youth Justice Board, Rod Morgan, said 'The general conclusions are almost incontrovertible. They are quite apparent from all the available data.' The report can be downloaded at: www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/youthjusticeaudit.html

Fear of crime or anxiety about change? Research funded by the Economic & Social Research Council, shows that everyday concerns about crime are much less common than previously thought. For those people who live relatively protected lives, the fear of crime tends to be a more diffuse feeling that reflects broader concerns about social change. For full details please read here www.esrc.societytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/ViewAward-Page.px?awardnumber=res-000-23-1108

The long view: intemperance, hoodies and destitution

The recently published report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation *What are today's social evils?* describes a 'deep sense of unease about some of the changes shaping British society'. A public web consultation sought to get an updated picture from the original evils identified by Rowntree in 1904, which included poverty, the opium trade and slavery. Respondents to the recent study "felt that Britain is more dangerous and violent than in the past. Child abuse and exploitation were highlighted as particularly damaging evils." Read the full report here: <http://www.social evils.org.uk/documents/social-evils-summary.pdf>

Other views from the past have reflected that 'Hoodies were also the scourge of Medieval London'. Interviewed in the Daily Telegraph, Professor Robert Bartlett, an expert on the Middle Ages has said that hooded tops were the garment of choice for 12th century apprentice boys of London who were 'away from home for seven years with no parental control and they would riot regularly for political and religious reasons'. The picture portrayed by Channel 4's 'City of Vice' tells us that, 'Problems of crime and destitution in Georgian Britain prompted a revolution in concern for the poor. With visionary ideas on prison reform, charitable hospitals and anti-slavery campaigns, philanthropists such as Hannah More and Thomas Coram sought to tackle the underlying causes of criminality and put an end to the poverty and destitution of Georgian society.'

Wealth and safety

The last few months have seen a succession of reports highlighting the link between poverty, crime and harms, for children and people at work.

According to the London Child Poverty Commission's new report 41 per cent of the capital's children live below the poverty threshold, compared with a UK average of around 30

per cent. The commission also reports there has been no significant decline in the capital's poverty rates since 2000. Carey Oppenheim, the chair of the commission, said: 'In London it is not just that child poverty rates are higher than elsewhere in the country, families are more likely to be in deeper poverty, more likely to be without a job, to have fewer choices about their housing and to face multiple disadvantages'. The full report can be read here: <http://213.86.122.139/docs/capital-gains.pdf>

At the same time, NHS hospital admissions data shows that children from poorer areas are at four times greater risk of being seriously injured on the road. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/health/article3655546.ece

Health and Safety Executive figures reported in April show that over 24,000 serious injuries were received by health workers over a three year period. Meanwhile, companies are fearful of the repercussions for their reputations of the new corporate manslaughter rules. A law firm survey reported in the Financial Times feared publicity orders, which would force them to detail their crime to investors, suppliers or the general public, almost as much as being fined up to 10% of their annual sales.

As well as injuries, a report from the TUC's Commission on Vulnerable Employment claims that more than 2 million workers are forced to endure 'intolerably poor working lives' being subjected to abuse from employers on a daily basis.

Those working in care homes, hotels, cleaning, restaurants, hair dressing and beauty, construction and security are vulnerable to practices 'that were once attacked as exploitative in the 19th century'. The full report can be read at: www.vulnerableworkers.org.uk/cove-report/

New from the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies

What is harmful? Who is responsible? What is crime?

The Centre's new *What is crime?* initiative funded by The Wates Foundation seeks to shed light on hidden or ignored crimes and harms under the themes of violence, environment and finance. Through a series of briefings, events and a national photography competition, we will be working to stimulate discussion about what is and isn't, what should and shouldn't be crime and criminal. The initiative was launched with the release of a research and policy briefing entitled 'A crisis of enforcement: The decriminalisation of death and injury at work' (more below). The authors, Professor Steve Tombs and Dr David Whyte, argue that there is a crisis of enforcement in dealing with harm that takes place during work because the Health and Safety Commission has neither the means nor the will to tackle the real level of death and injury experienced because of work. More than twice as many people are killed during work than by homicide and that serious injuries outstrip that recorded by the British

Crime Survey. To find out more about this publication and the *What is crime?* initiative, visit our website here www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/whatiscrime.html.

Probation resources, staffing and workloads 2001-2008

In work commissioned by NAPO, Dr Mark Oldfield and Dr Roger Grimshaw analyse recent trends in probation spending and workloads. Our new report indicates the Probation Service faces a budget and staffing crisis. For the full report, read here <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/probationsspending-structure.html>

'Gun crime' A review of evidence and policy

Professor Peter Squires with Dr Roger Grimshaw and Enver Solomon provide a comprehensive analysis of the nature and extent of the use of firearms in crime and an assessment of policy responses. The report concludes that an enforcement approach will not address the causes behind the use of firearms in crime and that most of the problems associated with the illegal use of firearms require social and economic rather than criminal justice solutions.

The use of the Community Order and the Suspended Sentence Order for Women

Sunita Patel (research and policy Associate at The Centre) and Stephen Stanley provide an examination of how community sentences are used for women, as part of our on-going Community Sentences project. For more information

see <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/community-sentences.html>

Scoping study on a community-based centre for male offenders

Dr Roger Grimshaw (Research Director) and Enver Solomon (Deputy Director) have published a report, commissioned by Lady Edwina Grosvenor, examining options for a model to work with adult male offenders who have multiple needs. The report is available at: www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/opus446/Scoping_study_report.pdf

Poverty and disadvantage amongst prisoners' families

Roger Grimshaw, Rose Smith, Renee Romeo and Martin Knapp, explore the poverty and disadvantage experienced by prisoners' families living at or below the level officially recognised as 'poor'. The full article can be read in *Benefits: The journal of poverty and social justice* Vol 16. no1. pp. 3-18. For an abstract and a link to the registration site where the full article can be accessed, click here. <http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/opus511.html>

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