

cjm

update

Race and the criminal justice system

Annual figures on ethnic minorities and the criminal justice system were published in December. An estimated 2% of the population aged 10 and over are black, 3% Asian and 1% from other non-white ethnic groups. The 1999 statistics show that:

- Racist incidents recorded by the police rose by 66 %
- One million stop and search procedures were carried out by the police of which 9% were of black people, 5% of Asian and 1% of other non-white ethnic groups
- Of 1890 homicides in the last three years 8% of the victims were black, 6% Asian and 3% other non-white ethnic origin. Ten of these homicides were recorded as being racially motivated
- The Crown Prosecution Service discontinued a higher proportion of cases involving black defendants on evidential grounds and were more likely to reduce charges against them for affray/disorder or theft according to recent research
- In June 1998 ethnic minorities accounted for 18% of the male prison population and 24% of the female prison population
- 8% of complaints made against the police in 1998/9 were from black people, 5% from Asian and 2% from people of other non-white ethnic origin

The full statistics are available on the Home Office website www.homeoffice.gov.uk

"The most significant current development in criminal justice is the passage of the Human Rights Act 1998 and its implementation in October 2000."

Lord Irvine of Lairg, The Lord Chancellor

Tagging as a community sentence

Electronic monitoring became available in England and Wales as a community sentence on 1st December. Until then it had been used only for selected prisoners released early. Research conducted in the areas where tagging as a community sentence has been piloted suggests that sentencers feel confident about its use and that completion rates are high, at 82% overall. It is available for offenders aged 16 and over and orders can last up to six months. Information about comparative costs shows that the average cost of a probation order is £2200, a community service order £1700 and an electronically monitored curfew order £1900 (£760 per month).

Further research and evaluation is to be conducted. A separate pilot scheme in Greater Manchester and Norfolk is trialing the use of curfew orders for offenders aged 10-15.

Minimum sentences for repeat burglars

Mandatory minimum sentences of three years imprisonment are to be imposed on repeat domestic burglars under powers which came into effect on 1st December 1999. Under the Crime (Sentences) Act 1997 section 4, Courts will be required to impose a sentence of at least three years on offenders aged 18 or over who have been convicted of domestic burglary and have two or more convictions for the same offence after the implementation of this provision. The court may vary this in light of particular circumstances which relate to any of the offences or the offender. In 1997 the average sentence length for third convictions for burglars was 19 months and 20% did not receive a custodial sentence.

Drug treatment and testing orders

An evaluation of the trials of Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) shows large reductions in offending and drug consumption, according to a Home Office report published in November. The average number of crimes committed per month by offenders on DTTOs fell dramatically from 107 to 10 while their average weekly spend on illegal drugs was reduced from £3400 to £330. The interim report of the evaluation is based on 78 DTTOs made during the first 10 months of an 18 month pilot scheme in Croydon, Liverpool and Gloucestershire. Almost half the urine tests carried out (48%) were negative for opiates, methadone, cocaine, amphetamines and benzodiazepines. Two thirds of those interviewed (67%) had not reoffended four weeks into the order.

comment

Partners in crime reduction?

Ruth Cane and Penny Fraser
comment on government plans to
reduce burglary and the role of local
Crime and Disorder Partnerships.

The prediction that by 2001 burglary could be set to rise by 25 per cent, and other property crimes by similar amounts, reversing the trend of the last six years, has been accompanied by an announcement from the Home Secretary of a national crime reduction 'Task Force'. This task force, which will be led by eight regional crime reduction directors, will aim to reduce burglary by 20 per cent over the next 5 years and other property crimes by at least this amount.

This projected rise is derived from a new crime forecasting model developed by Home Office criminologists which plots the relationship between crime and the economy and demographic factors. Greater numbers of young men and levels of consumerism are the key factors here. However it does not take into account the impact of any of the raft of crime reduction measures that the Government has introduced under 1998's Crime and Disorder Act or the

"Among the most fascinating issues for criminologists and criminal justice professionals in the next decade will be to watch for the emergent results of the evaluation of New Labour's much heralded Crime Reduction Programme to see what, if anything, really does work."

Professor A. Keith Bottomley, President, British Society of Criminology

accompanying Crime Reduction Programme.

The Reducing Burglary Initiative

The reduction of burglary in around 500 high burglary neighbourhoods in England and Wales was the first component of the Crime Reduction Programme to be launched. The focus for the first 63 'Strategic Development' burglary projects (which are already up and running) is on rigorous testing and evaluation of a range of established and innovative techniques for reducing burglary. Subsequent 'mainstream' projects - currently in their development stage - will replicate successful models and test out further innovative practice.

This ambitious programme is being overseen by the Home Office Crime Reduction Unit with the Government Offices for the regions assuming responsibility for the selection and implementation of projects. NACRO and Crime Concern are providing advice, training and technical support to local Crime and Disorder Partnerships and the successful mainstream projects within their district. The Policing and Reducing Crime Unit within the Home Office is co-ordinating the evaluation of the Programme - around 10 per cent of the total funding has been allocated to evaluation - which is being carried out by consortia of independent evaluators. Finally, two assessors have been appointed - Professors Ken Pease and Nick Tilley - who will report to the Home Office on the progress of the Strategic Development Projects and will provide a professional 'troubleshooting' service to these projects and Government Offices.

We outline here a few of the challenges facing partnerships that participate in the programme.

Integrating the project approach

Although the temptation is to apply to run one or more burglary reduction projects - because the opportunity for extra funds exists - local Crime and Disorder Partnerships need to consider carefully the way in which each proposed project fits with the overall Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy for the district. The support offered by Crime

Concern and NACRO will include technical matters such as how to conduct an audit of burglary and related risk factors and how to design and implement a project. It will also place considerable emphasis on the role of the project within the Crime and Disorder Strategy and other 'complementary strategies' such as the Youth Justice Plan or the annual Housing Investment Programme (which is important to burglary projects because it covers improvements in the physical condition and management of all housing sectors). Local partnerships have had to demonstrate their commitment to supporting successful projects beyond the Crime Reduction Programme funding and early alignment with the Strategy will assist in this.

For instance, the Hartlepool Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy identified house burglary as one of its six priorities for action and the burglary reduction project is the chief means of achieving this. The project has four elements: diversionary schemes for young people; education and awareness; target hardening with a focus on repeat victimisation and an anti-burglary co-ordinator.

Target-setting for burglary reduction

In their report (see note 1.) the Home Office assessors state that targets set for burglary reduction projects were mostly 'plucked from the air - roughly small enough to be obtainable but large enough to satisfy the Home Office' (p.26). These difficulties are not exclusive to the burglary reduction projects but are common to crime and disorder reduction partnerships generally. So, how can better targets be set? In particular, how can burglary projects set realistic and achievable goals for reducing domestic burglary which take account of the Home Office forecasts on the predicted rise in property crime? Key issues for consideration are:

- how have previous similar projects performed - taking account of differences in the local context and the concentration of activity (dosage)?
- what is known about the average rate of increase or decrease in burglary in the local area and the wider police



"Few people nowadays think of crime prevention as a job for the three 'C's' - cops, courts and corrections - and no-one else. The next ten years will show whether families, schools and communities can be consistently and effectively engaged to prevent young people from getting into crime in the first place, as well as reducing the opportunities for offending."

David Utting

"The dismantling of the probation service and all that it has stood for, and its replacement with a punishment agency could well be the biggest disaster for the criminal justice system during the coming decade."

Harry Fletcher, Assistant General Secretary, National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO)

divisional area?

- Home Office forecasts and what they might mean at a local level
- are other significant changes likely in the area which could impact on property crime: for example, major new housing developments?

Most burglary reduction projects express their targets as percentage reductions on previous years' figures. However, targets could be set relative to the local or national average burglary rate; or, to the underlying trend. For example, if, as is the case, burglary is expected to rise by 25 per cent by 2001, then a project could set itself the task of restricting the increase to 10% within its target area. This may not be the kind of fighting talk popular amongst local partnerships (although it is the language of crime management and reduction) but it is more realistic.

Involving local people in burglary reduction

It is no longer sufficient for agencies to decide they are going to tackle a problem such as burglary in their area of highest burglary and then put in place their preferred plan of action. The messages within the Crime and Disorder Act about consulting with local people should also apply to initiatives such as the crime reduction programme. Partnerships will need to ensure that they have discussed their plans with residents in the target area, that the views of local people - for example on the factors that lie behind the high burglary rate or the things that would help them feel safer - have been taken into account in the design of the project. Experience has shown that this level of involvement can reap many benefits for police and other partners in terms of greater co-operation from local residents and community groups during implementation, that it can assist in the conduct of monitoring and evaluation and that it can also improve resident-agency relationships more generally.

So what can the Initiative hope to achieve?

The Initiative is a key plank in the Government's strategy for

reducing crime. Much is at stake, not least of all the underpinning requirement placed upon the Home Office to demonstrate to the Treasury (whose 1998 spending review released the original £250 million for the overall Crime Reduction Strategy) that the burglary reduction techniques being piloted and tested are not only successful in reducing crime but are cost-effective as well. Notwithstanding the emphasis on prevention in much recent crime and social policy emanating from the Home Office and other government departments, there is a risk that the mantra of cost-effectiveness will lead to symptom-oriented rather than solution-oriented responses. Partnerships may fail to ask critical questions about why things happen - why particular groups and areas are at increased risk of victimisation; and why people are committing burglaries. It is these kinds of questions that are most likely to lead to sustainable approaches going beyond the 'quick win' technical fixes emphasising target hardening and protecting victims. Important though these approaches are, they tackle the symptoms and not the causes and on their own, will not bring about long-term change.

The burglary reduction projects present opportunities for local partnerships to develop innovative approaches, energising communities and agencies to bring about real change as well as short-term amelioration. Taking advantage of these opportunities requires a different and better approach; and, if determination has anything to do with success, then there is a good chance that many of these projects will make a real difference.

Ruth Cane is a Senior Consultant with Crime Concern and Penny Fraser is a Research and Development Manager with NACRO.

Note:

1. A report of the assessors' findings detailing their initial review of the burglary projects has recently been published by the Home Office as Tilley, N., Pease, K., Hough, M., and Brown, R. (1999) *Burglary Prevention: Early lessons from the Crime Reduction Programme*. Policing and Reducing Crime Unit Crime Reduction Research Series Paper 1. London: Home Office

The Government's Crime Reduction Strategy

England and Wales top the international league for burglary and vehicle theft. In 1998 police recorded 903 domestic burglaries per 100,000 population in England and Wales, compared with 863 in the USA and 203 in Germany. These figures help set the scene for the Government's new three year crime reduction set out in a recent Home Office document. Key elements of the strategy are:

Raising performance

- The establishment of a national Crime Reduction Taskforce
- The appointment of regional crime directors to every regional government office to scrutinise and support local crime reduction partnerships
- All Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships and police authorities are to set targets for reducing vehicle crime, domestic burglary and robbery from April 2000
- Targets set by police authorities will have to aim to bring their performance level with the performance of the top 25 per cent of their peers
- The Government's aim is to have the data to enable the same to be achieved by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships by 2001
- Police basic command unit (BCU) statistics to be published for the first time in addition to force-wide statistics, to enable more 'meaningful comparisons' to be made between local crime rates in different parts of one police force or the country.

Reducing burglary and property crime

- Two million homes covered by the reducing burglary initiative, aimed at preventing at least 15,000 domestic burglaries a year by 2001-2002
- Extra home security for less well-off pensioners in up to 150,000 homes from June 2000
- The establishment of a new

national Property Crime Action Team chaired by a senior member of the insurance industry

- Forthcoming Crime and Public Protection Bill will propose extended mandatory drug testing across the criminal justice system focused on high volume property offenders to identify drug users; inform bail decisions; inform community sentences; and monitor offenders under probation supervision
- Mandatory prison sentences of at least 3 years for third time burglars

Tackling vehicle crime

- The establishment of a Vehicle Crime Reduction Action Team involving representatives from the car industry to achieve a 30 per cent reduction in vehicle crime by 2004
- Improving security in car parks under the ACPO 'Secured Car Parks Scheme'
- £170 million investment in CCTV to create safer car parks, town centres and residential neighbourhoods

Dealing with disorder and anti-social behaviour

- Encouraging local authorities to make full use of their powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Order using a joint protocol drawn up by the Local Government Association and ACPO
- Social inclusion initiatives to strengthen communities including the New Deal for Communities and Sure Start Zones
- Reducing school truancy and exclusions by one third by 2002 for example through the 'Social Inclusion: Pupil Support' grant to schools
- Measures to change the policing of racist incidents and hate crime
- Inter-departmental 'Youth Inclusion Programme' targeting the most at risk young people on 70 high crime estates

Dealing effectively with young offenders

- Youth Offending Teams in all areas of England and Wales by April 2000
- Creation of youth specialists within the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to work with police to identify persistent young offenders
- Setting up of young offender panels for first time young offenders pleading guilty to offences where no custodial sentence is required under provisions of the 1999 Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act
- Implementation of Sure Start initiative with parents and pre-school age children

Dealing effectively with adult offenders

- New measures in the Crime and Public Protection Bill to restructure the Probation Service into a centrally-driven service with operational areas aligned to police boundaries
- Implementation of Narey Review recommendations on reducing delay in criminal proceedings
- Focus on more serious casework stemming from the Glidewell review of the CPS
- National implementation of prison-magistrate court video links enabling defendants to give evidence from prison
- Initiative for Integrating

Business Systems (IBS) to improve the exchange of information throughout the criminal justice system

- Improving the enforcement of community penalties and prison regimes to reduce re-offending rates
- Finding more effective means of responding to offenders with a severe personality disorder

Helping victims and witnesses

- Implementation of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (1999) providing greater protection for rape victims including a ban on victims being cross-examined by the defendant in person; new measures to help child witnesses; and measures to help other vulnerable or intimidated witnesses give evidence in court
- Further annual funding for Victim Support
- From April 2001, CPS to implement Macpherson and Glidewell recommendations that CPS should have responsibility for informing victims about their decisions

Copies of the Strategy can be obtained from the Home Office Communication Directorate or by visiting the Home Office website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk

"Criminal policy is at a crossroads. Two possibilities face us. Either we all become prisoners, the have-nots imprisoned in their homes controlled by electronic monitoring and the haves imprisoned in their neighbourhoods, controlled by fear of crime. Or we shall see a system that has moved from retribution to restorative justice, a system more effective in dealing with crime and satisfying its victims."

Baroness Stern, Penal Reform International

comment

The Probation Service today

Jeremy Cameron expresses his concern about changes to the role of the Probation Service.

The Probation Service is barely functioning at present. Does anybody care?

They pretend that everything is running smoothly. They pretend that we can do our jobs. They claim to be doing effective work with thousands and thousands of people who have broken the law. In reality this is frequently a lie.

Many of our clients will not be seen by a probation officer at all. Many more will be merely ticked in and ticked out. Government talks about new successful programmes. These may or may not be useful but in many areas there is no-one to run them anyway. Then, when the clients do not come in to the office (perhaps because there is nothing to come in for) they are immediately taken back to court ('breached') without any attempt to engage in the longer

term or help them through their orders. It is said that breaching them will help them do so. 'Enforcement' is the only practice that counts with the present Home Secretary, Jack Straw. Put them on probation. Then fail them.

Everyone knows all this and everyone knows how useless it is but nobody dares speak out. Who will tell the public that the government is knowingly and wilfully presiding over a sham?

The Conservative government cut the probation budget so severely that there was never any chance of a proper service being maintained. Then, to add insult to injury, swathes of extra tasks and extra procedures were ordered, all out of existing budgets. Many probation officers were taken out of frontline work; the abolition of training for a while meant that there were no new staff available to do the work as existing staff left in droves; today it is often done by new, underpaid, exploited, unqualified workers. Administrative staff were massively cut and probation officers ordered to do all their own typing in addition to everything else. All this was supposedly facilitated by a new computer system which was a disaster and which has now finally been abandoned.

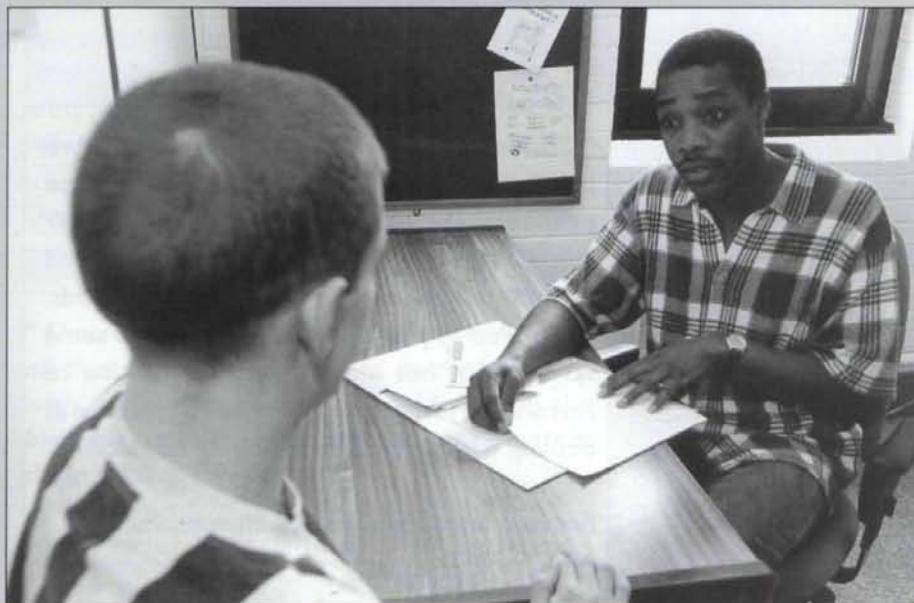
As workloads mounted, the facade of normal working cracked ever more widely. Prison throughcare, that is working with prisoners during sentence to assist their rehabilitation, has in many

areas been effectively abandoned. In probation offices, caseloads of probationers or licencees rose from about forty to eighty - or a hundred - or a hundred and twenty! - in some instances. Supposed new methods of working were brought in: probation officers would not see clients themselves but would farm them out to other agencies, and count that as reporting. In Community Service, huge caseloads meant that clients could hardly ever be seen individually and were far more likely to fail. In probation, 'National Standards' meant that clients were seen relentlessly for three months and then hardly seen at all because there was no-one to see them. The only area of work better resourced was groupwork, perhaps because it was seen as more punitive. What about the vast number of clients not suitable for groupwork but needing an individual probation officer to help them with the multiplicity of problems that brought them to break the law in the first place? Tough.

People break the law for a variety of reasons but in general it is fairly easy to see why someone has come to court. Poverty, unemployment and family breakdown are the background causes, involving housing problems, ghettoisation and hopelessness. Stemming from this background, drug and alcohol abuse are at present the major immediate instigators of crime. It may not be easy to stop crime but it is easy to see some of its sources.

To try to change this it is necessary to help people with these problems. This is not to condone their crime but it is to take a realistic approach to preventing it. It is not, however, an approach that goes down well with Michael Howard or Jack Straw, those interchangeable ostriches looking at the world in the only way possible from their position. They don't think there are any votes in helping criminals.

Straw still says he believes in putting people on probation; but he wants a Probation Service so farcically removed from reality that it would actually be a waste of money. You take some of the most chaotic members of society. You put them on probation because they are chaotic. They miss an appointment. So you take them back to court for being chaotic!



Very constructive.

Then Straw has the gall to say that it is probation's fault that the prisons are so full; it's because they don't breach people enough! He does not try to explain this weird logic, needless to say. In reality, the prisons are full because successive Home Secretaries will not promote use of the alternatives. Furthermore Straw is prepared to make them even fuller. Probation has a better record than prison for stopping people offending, measured from the moment of sentence over the next few years. Yet the prison population has risen by twenty thousand and is still rising. It costs about £25,000 per year to keep someone in prison. It costs about £1,500 to put them on probation. Has someone gone mad here?

Some people will inevitably go to prison because of the seriousness of their offences. However, most have not committed offences that serious. Furthermore, many of them both want and need help. They will sometimes be difficult, confused, unreliable and awkward. That is why they are on probation. They need, however, to be treated with understanding. On the one hand they need to be seen properly, given respect, listened to and assisted. On the other hand they do not need to be taken straight back to court if they miss an appointment or two. It is easy to talk tough; far harder to talk sense. We actually need a Home Secretary prepared to look at the complexity of issues, explain them to the public, back the Probation Service in its successful record of reducing crime and fund it so that it does not collapse. We also need a Home Secretary more interested in reducing crime than in wantonly meting out punishment.

Unfortunately we haven't got a Home Secretary prepared to do

any of these things. What we have is a man making bigoted statements about travellers, refugees, even 'squeegee merchants'; a man who has reversed his views, stated while in opposition, on freedom of information, jury trial, asylum seekers, in fact just about everything; a man clearly aiming for the gut prejudice rather than the reasoned analysis, perhaps because he thinks it will buy him another five years in power.

Meanwhile the Probation Service is in chaos. There are simply not enough staff to do the job. We have a still-dedicated workforce trying to do the work but breaking down in all directions. Sickness levels are appalling. A psychologist in a recent survey said that stress levels in probation were the worst she had come across in any profession. Morale is abysmal. Other surveys show complete contempt for senior management, the Home Office and the Home Secretary. But nobody speaks out publicly about what is happening because under this Labour regime the slightest dissent is treated like treason. Anyway, nobody wants to know what the practitioners think, those people who actually do the job and work with the clients. They might speak the truth.

This government is not keen on the truth. Hospital waiting lists are fiddled. Unemployment figures are fiddled. It is more important to reduce the waiting lists than to treat the people who are on them; it is more important to pretend someone is no longer unemployed than to give them a job. In probation, it is more important to talk about effective practice than to back the people who are truly being effective. There may not be votes in the truth. ■

Jeremy Cameron is a Probation Officer in North East London.

"The 1990s have been dominated by the demand for a better understanding of the concerns of victims. I hope the next decade will see the causes of criminal behaviour more thoughtfully addressed by researchers and policy-makers, so that there may be fewer victims.."

Lord Justice Brooke, Court of Appeal

The contribution of research to policy

Edited version of a speech given by **Paul Wiles**, Director, Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate at the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies (ISTD) AGM, November 1999

In spite of the fact that over the last few years recorded crime in this country has been falling, the overall long-term trend in crime in the second half of this century has been consistently upwards. Whilst we have more knowledge we do not necessarily have great wisdom in dealing with crime. This has been accompanied by a general damping down of public debate about crime. All too often the crime debate is reduced to a simple concern as to whether total police recorded crime has gone up or down by one or two percentage points. Yet all of us involved in criminology know perfectly well that many of the actions taken to try and reduce crime over the longer term may, in the short run, put recorded crime figures either up or down. Criminologists have ceased to play a significant part in the public debates about crime and crime policy, and the consequence has been that those debates have become less sophisticated and more simplistic.

Yet for all these problems we, as criminologists, at present have a wonderful new opportunity. This opportunity essentially comes from two different but related changes. Firstly, when the present Government came into power it committed itself to an evidence-led crime reduction strategy and initially put £250 million into funding that undertaking. That approach and the money available has since been extended by further monies for the drugs reduction strategy and the CCTV Challenge Fund.

Secondly, the Prime Minister has made very clear his desire to modernise the Civil Service. There are, of course, many aspects to its modernisation but two particular features are of interest. The first feature is the fact that a modernised Civil Service should be accountable in terms of the outcomes it delivers in the world, rather than the outputs it produces. So, for example, the passing of a piece of legislation is not in itself a sign of success, but rather whether that legislation achieves the changes in the real world that it was designed to produce. In addition to being held accountable for the delivery of outcomes, a modernised Civil Service will also be expected to play its part in the generation of ideas and the development of new policies. These changes, I believe, present some significant opportunities for those of us involved in criminology.

Evidence-led policy

Firstly, the idea of evidence-led policy. Effectively when the present Government committed itself to evidence-led policy it radically changed the existing relationship between Government, policy making, research, evaluation and the development of programmes. Evidence-led policy implies that policy should be evidence-based. The whole of the crime prevention programme that the present Government initially put in place was developed by the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office and was published as the Home Office Research Study No. 187, entitled "Reducing Offending, an assessment of research evidence on ways of dealing with offending behaviour". It was unusual in being the first time that a Government strategy to reduce crime had been quite so clearly based upon published and evaluated evidence. Now, of course, anybody who has been involved in criminal policy will recognise the constant danger that politicians, no matter how committed they are to acting on the basis of evidence, are subject to short term political pressures of a contrary nature. There are no guarantees that this will not happen. However, the declaration of an evidence based policy now exists as an ever present counterweight to those other pressures.

Evidence-led policy implies that policy should be evidence driven. This is a recognition that

policy development is an ongoing process that depends on the evaluations of early programmes and initiatives to provide the basis for the possible main-streaming of those initiatives. Evidence, in other words, is not just something that starts a policy but the collection of evidence is an ongoing part of the development and modification of policy. This means that research must constantly go alongside policy and implementation - hardly a surprising statement, but radical if fully implemented.

The third conclusion implied by an evidence-led policy is that evidence should guide choices that may have to be made between policy alternatives. It is for this reason that the Crime Prevention Programme evaluations will all include cost benefit analyses tied into an overarching framework for comparative analysis. This is so that the relative effects of different programmes across the criminal justice system, and potentially beyond it, can be examined to test the efficacy of policy choices.

This notion of evidence-led policy was not, however, merely something dreamt up within the Home Office. The Treasury, in funding the whole Crime Prevention Programme, earmarked a proportion of the total as an indicative spend on evaluating the programme and made clear that future resources depended on the evaluation outcomes. Our present Crime Prevention Programme, therefore, is also a vehicle for developing and extending the knowledge base for future crime prevention. It is for this reason that some of the activity in the Crime Prevention Programme is initially exploratory and is then followed by a main-streaming implementation phase based upon the results of those exploratory projects. This is an attempt to fuse together in one process the business of creating policy, generating the knowledge base necessary for policy, and implementing policy in practice in the real world. This is both an ambitious and very important shift from what has generally happened in the past. It links ideas, evidence, policy and practice in a more direct way than has usually been the case. It acknowledges that all those elements are linked in a dynamic process in which there will be continuing iterative effects.

Aims-led management

Turning to the separate issue of the modernisation of the Civil Service, I am sure everybody is now aware

that the Prime Minister is especially concerned with modernising public bodies in Britain and the Civil Service is no exception. One aspect of that modernising agenda is the creation of aims-led management across Whitehall. The Home Office now has a stated purpose: "To build a safe, just and tolerant society in which the rights and responsibilities of individuals, families and communities are properly balanced and the protection and security of the public are maintained". That stated purpose is, in turn, broken down into seven main aims reflecting the different areas of Home Office responsibility:

- reduction in crime, particularly youth crime, and in the fear of crime; and the maintenance of public safety and good order
- delivery of justice through effective and efficient investigation, prosecution, trial and sentencing, and through support for victims
- prevention of terrorism, reduction in other organised and international crime and protection against threats to national security
- effective execution of the sentences of the courts so as to reduce re-offending and protect the public
- helping to build a modernised constitution, a fair and prosperous society in which everyone has a stake, and in which the rights and responsibilities of individuals, families and communities are properly balanced
- regulation of entry to and settlement in the UK in the interests of social stability and economic growth and facilitation of travel by UK citizens
- reduction in the incidence of fire and related death, injury and damage, and ensuring the safety of the public through civil protection.

The aims-led management structure implies that all activity within the Home Office now has to be justified in relation to the role it plays in delivering one of the Home Office's stated aims or its overall purpose. This also means, that the research programme within the Home Office has to be constructed and justified in relation to that stated purpose and those seven aims.

The Home Office has created objectives and performance indicators to measure how

effective it is in achieving its aims in the real world. Civil servants should be accountable for outcomes in the real world, rather than simply outputs within Government itself.

This modernising drive to focus on outcomes has also led to that oft-repeated political mantra - there should be joined-up government. This means that the needs of the real world should drive the way in which policies are delivered rather than the historical demarcations of either Whitehall or town halls. This, of course, has potentially radical implications. We are all used to thinking of problems in terms of the categories devised by Governments and service deliverers. Even though we tend to act as if our subject of crime is naturally distinct from other kinds of problems, we know at a theoretical level that this is not necessarily the case. For those living in high crime victimisation areas the experience of crime victimisation is quite likely to accompany other suffering. The neat distinction of harms into different categories may not adequately describe the overall process of victimisation, nor adequately respond to the victim's desire for protection and the provision of public bodies for the management of those risks. To respond better we need joined-up government, joined-up service delivery, joined-up information systems and a capacity to develop joined-up policies. This is a challenge which precisely requires a modernised machinery of governance.

New ideas

Finally, the question of new ideas. One of the main drives behind the demand for modernisation of public institutions is that in late modern societies there will be increasingly rapid social change and the business of enterprise will be based upon a knowledge-driven economy. A modernised Civil Service, therefore, has to be able to generate ideas at a rate commensurate with the processes of social change which it is trying to both respond to and, in part, manage. Such a knowledge-based change agenda cannot possibly be provided by the Civil Service unless it has effective and productive relations with many external groups and individuals who can contribute towards the generation of new ideas. From the inside this means we have to tear down the walls that have traditionally segregated the Civil

Service from other institutions, and to do so in a way which does not compromise the independence, objectivity and integrity of the Service. For those outside the business of Government, there will be an increasing market for ideas and, in particular, big ideas. I am struck at the moment by how few well-worked big new ideas about the delivery of criminal justice there are available in public discourse. Yet this appears to me to be exciting territory for academics and organisations like the CCJS.

These twin themes of knowledge-based policy and the modernisation of the Civil Service, present great opportunities for those engaged in the business of criminological research or in the development and implementation of new programmes in the areas of criminal justice.

Although the new opportunities are considerable, there are some problems which could inhibit the response to these opportunities.

Research and development infrastructure

First of all one consequence of the new Crime Reduction Programme and other Government initiatives is that there has been a sudden increase in the resources available for research and development. This raises the question of whether we have available in this country the research and development infrastructure to manage and run such a large-scale research programme. My worry is not whether we could develop it, but whether we can develop it quickly enough.

My second concern is whether we have a skills shortage in criminological research in this country. The relative lack of criminological research money in the past reduced the opportunities for new people to be trained and become criminologists. I am also concerned about whether British criminology has sufficiently developed the skills of numerical analysis. I recognise that British criminology has the compensatory advantage that frequently it has demonstrated a greater degree of theoretical sophistication than in many other countries. However, in a sensible world one would want both skills developed to the highest possible degree. I am not implying that there are particular approaches or methodologies that necessarily have to be used in order to conduct

the business of criminological research. I do not accept the argument either that numerical skills are only needed within a positivist tradition or that those who possess such skills will necessarily use a positivist methodology. The ability to use numbers can be deployed equally effectively within any methodology or in any theoretical tradition.

The fact that almost as much secondary analysis of large data sets, such as the British Crime Survey, are carried out by Americans as by British academics is an example of this problem. If we are going to continue to invest significant resources in large-scale data collection we really do need to ensure that we get the maximum benefit out of those data sets. There was a time when collecting data was relatively cheap, but analysing it was costly. That equation has now reversed. Analysing data is relatively cheap, but collecting data is costly.

My third concern is that whilst criminology started life as a multi-disciplinary area of study, and that people engaged in criminological research came from different backgrounds, we have more recently seen the emergence of people for whom criminology is their discipline. The problem with this is that not all the research we are interested in necessarily fits within the existing boundaries of criminology. There is a challenge, therefore, as to whether we can construct the kind of multi-disciplinary teams that we are going to need to complete much of the new research agenda. Such teams will not necessarily be found within a single university, but may have to be constructed across universities, or even between universities and other research and consultancy organisations. This will raise new organisational challenges for researchers.

My fourth concern is whether having tried to create a better link between research, policy development and implementation at Government level, we now have the necessary methodologies to blend programme development and evaluation into a single process. We do need to ensure that evaluation is sufficiently independent, objective and rigorous so that it provides the basis for future policy development. However, it is not very helpful to have an evaluation methodology that tells you at the end of two years that a programme has not worked because there was implementation failure during its

first month. We need to create new skills and new methodological thinking about how programme development and evaluation can work together.

My fifth concern is that whilst we tend to have a reasonable research base on which to develop policies, we do not have an equally good research base on how to deliver programmes. This is partly a question of needing to develop project management skills. If you look at the evaluation of many of the early attempts to implement wide-scale criminal justice programmes - such as the Safer Cities programmes - one of the common conclusions is that a key impediment to success was the lack of an adequate project management framework to implement ideas. We need to develop research methodologies so that we understand not just what works, but how to mainstream what works in different places at different times. In a broader sense we need to have an understanding of what hinders and what helps policy delivery.

These problems, in turn, raise further questions. Are our traditional disciplines and the way they are defined adequate to the new tasks of a rapidly changing social world? Furthermore, are universities flexible enough to deliver this new agenda? I am conscious that often university researchers are being asked to carry out research within a framework and timetable which do not always fit easily with the other demands on their time, such as teaching. I am also conscious that university researchers are often expected to conduct their research without the proper infrastructure for them to do so. The provision of a desk, a library, and a computer is no longer all that is needed.

Promoting innovative practice and a professional agenda

This is problematic enough, but we also need to ensure that we can link in to the ongoing innovation which the newly emerging structures of crime control and criminal justice are producing. How, for example, can we ensure that our work is linked to that of the crime prevention partnerships and the innovations they are producing? Can we be certain that we learn from them as much as they learn from us and can we help them to be innovative? We have enough universities in this country that it

should not be difficult to create natural links between universities, researchers and local groups trying to innovate and develop new projects. How can we ensure that whatever evidence and knowledge is produced is actually used? What kind of collective information channels are needed and what kind of quality controls can we deploy across that information to underwrite its quality? I have noticed with interest that in medicine there has been the emergence of what have become known as "Cochrane Centres", to pull together and systematise a quality control-led and practical knowledge base. I am aware that ESRC is seeking to develop such a structure for the social sciences and wonder whether in the area of criminology we should not be thinking about developing our own Cochrane structure?

In part this focuses attention on what we can do to further professionalise the business of programme development, evaluation, research and the production of knowledge in criminology. I am not suggesting that most of the work going on is unprofessional. It is nothing of the kind. Much of it is of high quality and highly professional.

That professionalism, however, needs to be more than just about information, knowledge, or even quality-controlled knowledge. At the end of the day social policy is not just about efficacy nor is it just about efficiency. It is also about what kind of vision of civic society we are trying to achieve. In other words it has moral purpose as well as technical purpose. Criminology needs to be able to deliver criminological wisdom and not just criminological knowledge.

More details of these aims and the related objectives and performance indicators may be found on the Home Office web pages. www.homeoffice.gov.uk