



ALL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOR
CHILDREN

Chair: Baroness Massey of Darwen

Vice-Chairmen: Jessica Lee MP, Baroness Walmsley, Baroness Blood, Bill Esterson MP, Baroness Berridge

Secretary: Baroness Howarth of Breckland **Treasurer:** Earl of Listowel

Clerk: Heather Ransom

There was a meeting of the
All Party Parliamentary Group for Children on:
Tuesday 5th November 2013
4:30-6:00pm, Committee Room 4A, House of Lords
(booked in the name of Baroness Massey)

Children and the Police inquiry:

Oral evidence session 1: 'Developing good relationships between children, young people and the police'

This was the first meeting of the APPG's new inquiry into 'Children and the Police'. It explored how the police develop relationships with children and young people, both within and outside the school environment, highlighted good practice used by police forces and considered how engagement can be improved.

Members in attendance: Baroness Howarth, Earl of Listowel, Baroness Garden, Baroness Walmsley, Baroness Howe

Speakers: Jacqui Cheer (Cleveland Police and ACPO), Mak Chishty (Met Police), Katy Bourne (Sussex Police), Andrew Pilbury (Tytherington High School), Michael Brookes (Tytherington High School), Josh Roberts (Tytherington High School), David Storey (Safer Schools Partnership, Cheshire Police), Andrei Ilie (Safer London Foundation), Matt Sharp (Safer London Foundation), Kate Smith (Safer London Foundation), Dominic Rogers (Youth Ambassador, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner), Elizabeth Stanton (Safer Schools Partnership, Cheshire Police)

Voluntary and community sector in attendance: Chris Bath (National Appropriate Adult Network), Thienhuong Nguyen (Women's Aid), Laura Wetherly (Barnardo's), Olivia Bonito (Barnardo's), Theo Naidoo (Barnardo's), Carron Fox (Barnardo's), Amanda Henshall (University of Greenwich), Caroline Adams (Sussex Police), Philippa Goffe (Ministry of Justice), Marion Sandwell (Youth Justice Board), Anna Agius (work experience, House of Lords), Richard Gittings (Met Police), Jack Hart (ACPO), Helen Atwood (Kids Company), Fiona Pienaar (Place2Be), Catryn Yousefi (Howard League), John Metcalfe (BASW), Amber Eustace (NCB), Enver Solomon (NCB), Laura Courtney (NCB), Heather Ransom (NCB), Rosie Eatwell-White (NCB)

Apologies: Baroness Massey, Baroness Blood, Baroness Hughes, Lord Judd, Dame Anne Begg MP, Elfyn Llwyd MP, Alex Cunningham MP, Benita Resson (Place2Be), John Kemmis (Voice), Lynne Burnham, Paola Uccellari (CRAE), Dave Shephard

Baroness Howarth chaired this meeting in Baroness Massey's absence.

Baroness Howarth welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Jacqui Cheer: explained her role as national policing lead for children and young people. She coordinates policy work so as to ensure that decision making and policy across different areas relating to children and young people is consistent.

Expectations of the police

- The police's key responsibility is saving lives and protecting people.
- There is a growing gap between what people want the police to do when it comes to general engagement with children and young people, and what the police are actually realistically able to do, particularly small forces such as in Cleveland.

Engagement with children and young people

- Police engage in partnerships with specialist teams dealing with children and young people, such as Youth Offending Teams.
- Children and young people will often first engage with front line staff. Whilst she would hope that all police in these situations are well trained and completely competent, the reality is that front line work is very difficult. Officers do not know what they will face from one minute to another.

Groups at risk of criminalisation

- The largest group are children and young people in public spaces.
 - As a society, we are becoming increasingly intolerant of young people in public spaces and are too quick to label young people's behaviour as anti-social.
 - She asked where young people were expected to go when so many public spaces had been closed down and questioned whether a group of three or four people gathered together laughing and joking, for example, constituted anti-social behaviour.
 - The police are in a difficult position as they feel that they have to 'deal with' young people if a complaint is made the public, despite the behaviour not necessarily being particularly anti-social.
- Vulnerable children and young people make up the next biggest group which the police engage with, although Jacqui stated that it was important not to label these people.
 - Temporarily vulnerable children and young people are those who go missing from home or get involve in drink or drugs. Usually this group doesn't set out to cause trouble and are embarrassed when the police get involved.
 - The other group the police engage with are those with long-term vulnerabilities, particularly mental health needs. The closure of mental health services means that police are unable to refer these children and they can end up being held by police, which is totally inappropriate.
 - In addition, children who have been victimised or abused will often commit offences to get themselves noticed by police.
 - Trafficked children or looked after children can be criminalised and there is a need for a consistent police approach regarding looked after children. The police often deal with situations involving children in care but had the child been in the family home, the police would not have been called. The incident is then recorded as a criminal offence, despite the police's ongoing attempts to get the Home Office to change this.
- The third group that the police engage with are young offenders.
 - She said that restorative justice was working well, that numbers are going down and that out of court disposals are proving to be very useful for young people.

The work being done in Cleveland

- Due to cuts in funding, Jacqui has had to withdraw police from their work in schools.
- Police are also engaging less with youth programme and summer programmes.
- Instead, Cleveland Police are targeting resources for work with troubled families. The force is replicating this model to tackle mental health issues.
- It is also concentrating funds on restorative justice for under 18s and work with the Cadets and The Prince's Trust.

Mak Chishty: explained his role as a Commander responsible for nine boroughs and for implementing the new neighbourhood policing model. He is also responsible for a number of key areas including children and young people.

Met's areas of work regarding children and young people

- The Met has been focusing on getting police officers into schools. He quoted that there were 282 safer schools police officers working in 648 schools across London.
- Safer Neighbourhood Teams were also very important.
- The Met and five London headteachers have formed an action group focusing on how safer schools officers can meet the needs of children and young people; how information about children and young people can be passed between the police and community partners; and on young girls, gangs and violence and sexual abuse.

Areas for improvement

- A survey of 1,200 young people showed that they wanted the police to be friendlier and more open minded.
- New officers are now receiving training at point of entry into the profession.
- Programmes of engagement are being extended to primary schools as well as secondary schools – Mak cited the Junior Citizens scheme and the City Safe campaign.
- He highlighted that the survey showed that only 20% of young people were happy to report to the police and 23% of those who reported weren't happy with the service by the police.
- Stop and search was a key area of concern, he said, with young people indicating on the survey that they wanted the police to be more polite and to explain why they were being stopped.
- He also acknowledged that the biggest risks of young people being criminalised were in the areas of highest deprivation and in BME areas.

Katy Bourne: explained that in her role as Police and Crime Commissioner she was responsible for policing in its totality in Sussex, including setting priorities and budgets. She said that her work represents the biggest reform of policing in the country so far.

Importance of giving children and young people a voice

- Katy raised the issue that children and young people cannot vote and have no say in what the police do. Their voices must be heard.
- In Sussex, the police involve young people through take-over days, where young people can question the police; the creation by 25 young people of a Young People's Policing and Crime Plan; a strategic and young people oversight group to share good practice; and the launch of the Youth Commission involving young people.

Projects in Sussex

- In 2010, Sussex Police ran a survey which generated 3,500 responses.
- Results showed that under 13s who had less contact with the police viewed them more positively, whilst over 13s who had more contact with the police were more likely to view them negatively. This will be looked into by the Youth Commission.
- Neighbourhood Police Officers scheme: officers went into schools to talk with children from a very young age, right up to late teens, in order to help children understand the law. Education is key and this project will continue to be funded as much as possible
- Youth Offending Teams lead a project called 'Can Do' and a crime diversion scheme, 'Keep Out', which works with young people at risk of reoffending and has had very positive results.

- Attempts keep looked after children out of the criminal justice system by trying to find a community resolution through a triage system which intervenes at an early age.

Priorities going forward

- Developing work with looked after children, in particular a protocol in the South East for dealing with looked after children, tackling the vulnerability of this group.
- Sharing data in an area of priority.
- Implementing Operation Encompass which requires police to report incidents of domestic violence involving children to schools, so that schools are aware that it has happened. This follows a successful pilot in Devon and Cornwall.

Peers posed questions to the speakers:

- What work was being done to train established police officers, through CPD for example?
- Do aspects of the police's work engaging with young people and building relationships feed into officers' assessment?
- Are the police were involved in mentoring boys with absent fathers?

Mak Chishty: explained that the Met are moving away from the enforcement model and are increasingly working on engaging and building relationships, especially since the London riots. He confirmed that this kind of work did feed into the assessment of officers.

Jacqui Cheer: explained that mentoring boys was done through engagement with The Prince's Trust. Whilst the police acknowledged the importance of the issue, but that it was not possible to allow officers to mentor boys on police time as they are too busy. Instead, police are encouraged to volunteer to mentor boys in their own time. She acknowledged that different forces have different schemes and that it may happen elsewhere, and she also highlighted the importance of sharing evidence and good practice.

Katy Bourne: said that in Sussex officers worked as key workers as part of the troubled families programme.

Peers posed additional questions, including:

- How do the police establish good relationships with schools and are they were welcomed?
- Was there anything in the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill that the police felt peers should be tackling specifically?

Jacqui Cheer: explained that it varied. Some schools didn't want to interact with the police as they worried it would lead to the school being labelled. Sometimes the police would work in schools as part of the curriculum, sometimes after school and sometimes during the holidays. In some schools, the police even have an office on the school grounds, and are using the school as a local community base, but each case was different.

Regarding the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill, Jacqui acknowledged that the police needed the tools to be able to deal with anti-social behaviour but felt that it was important to understand what anti-social behaviour really is. She expressed personal concern that behaviour that is currently not considered anti-social will be defined in that way in the future, and that there needed to be a mature debate on the issue.

Mak Chishty: The Met are successfully reducing anti-social behaviour by focusing on talking to one-off offenders and explaining the impact of their behaviour. This group are then unlikely to reoffend.

Enver Solomon: asked the speakers:

- Given research and surveys which show that increased interaction with the police reduces children and young people's confidence in the police, what single thing could be done to improve this?
- Did the speakers feel that the age of criminal responsibility should be raised from 10 to 14?

Jacqui Cheer: disagreed that the age of criminal responsibility should be risen and said the focus needed to be not on age but on how the police dealt with children and young people. She said that police have the responsibility of keeping the streets safe and that they needed to communicate with young people about their rights and their responsibilities through conversations not confrontations.

Katy Bourne: referred to the 2010 survey and suggested that these results may be due to the way police speak to young people in the street. It was also important to educate children so that they understand that their behaviour may feel threatening to others.

Mak Chishty: said that a lot of children and young people are scared of the journey to school or scared at night. They found it reassuring to know that the police are stopping and searching people and removing weapons.

The meeting moved on to hear from the next group of speakers.

Liz Stanton: explained her role as a PC with the Safer Schools Partnership, which was started in 2003. There are now six officers embedded in schools across Cheshire, Halton and Warrington.

Andrew Pilbury: explained the background to his school's work with the Safer Schools Partnership and said that Macclesfield had been identified as an area of high crime and high youth offending.

Attitudes towards the scheme

- Other schools had been offered the opportunity of working with a PC, but had declined because of concern that it would generate a negative perception of the school.
- Now that they could see the positive impact of having a PC in school, this attitude had changed.

Benefits of the scheme

- Increased safety for children arriving at and leaving school
- Pupils receive advice on their futures, support after exclusion and safeguarding support
- Pupils engage in programmes which offer 'pre-NEET' support
- Restorative support when relationships break down for both pupils and staff
- Staff have benefitted from advice on approaches and on developing school policy
- Parents have benefitted from advice and support
- Pupils have a better opportunity to meet their potential
- Since PC Storey has been in post attendance has increased, behaviour incidents have decreased to 21.8% of previous levels and the number of exclusions has dropped from 40 to 18. Other factors could have contributed to this, such as a new headteacher and assistant headteacher, but PC Storey has had an impact on this as well.

David Storey: has been a police officer for ten years and had previously always a frontline officer. He explained that his role was to work with disaffected pupils, the 'pre-NEET' group, and to work alongside the safeguarding lead to share information. Having a police officer in the school was having a very positive effect on children and while he acknowledged that it may seem extravagant to have a PC based in a school, work like his meant that young people were less likely to get involved in crime later in life and was therefore very cost effective.

Josh Roberts: spoke about how in Year 10 he had disliked school, tried to avoid learning and been arrested for criminal damage outside school. He felt he needed to make a change in his life. On one occasion when he was leaving isolation PC Storey asked if he was alright. He has since built a strong relationship with PC Storey and has worked with him on how to approach things.

Michael Brookes: spoke about how he had previously had very low attendance and low aspirations, and had committed crimes both inside and outside school, including stealing phones and starting fires. He said that PC Storey had helped him to turn his life around. Rather than being given a criminal record, he

had completed community work, and PC Storey had helped him to improve his relationships with teachers, and to improve his home life. Without this, he believes he would have been excluded.

Dominic Rogers: explained that he had been in his role for three and a half months. In order to inform his talk today, he sent out survey to children and young people for their views, and received more than 1000 responses from schools, youth clubs and young offender institutes.

Attitudes towards the police

- Asked if they had been stopped by the police, 329 said they had been.
- Of those who had been stopped, 70% had had a positive interaction with the police.
- For those who had not been stopped, this figure was 95%.
- Dominic felt that this was an area that the police needed to look into.

Victims of crime

- Many young victims of crime felt that they were not listened to and that their opinions weren't valued. Dominic felt that this was because they were young and so not taken seriously.
- This was highlighted at a child sexual exploitation conference last week, where the strong message was that children and young people must be believed and taken seriously by police.

Groups facing criminalisation

- Stressed the importance of not stereotyping groups but to take each child at face value, on an individual basis.
- Young offenders were reluctant to respond to the survey and talk about their experiences.
- Many cited alcohol and boredom as reasons for getting involved in crime, and for those who are NEET, crime is often a distraction.
- In Cheshire, many youth clubs and youth services are closing down. Young people want places to get information or to meet friends but cannot find places to seek support or spend time.

Good practice

- National Citizenship Service: two police community support officers attended without wearing their uniforms, which meant that the young people didn't know they were police officers. They built good relationships with them and got to know them as people, rather than as the police.
- Over the summer PCSOs organised a free event for young people, and as a result engaged with young people who they might not otherwise have met and strengthened links with adults in the community.
- 'Speak Out' is a group set up for young people to have a voice and to be able to feed back to the police. Once young people have been involved, they are kept up to date with progress.
- Young volunteers working within youth groups can be really positive, and can offer a mentoring opportunity for an older student working with a younger student who may have an absent father.

Kate Smith: explained the work of the Safer London Foundation, a medium-sized charity which works across London on issues such as gangs, serious youth violence and violence against girls. A key focus is on prevention and rehabilitation and on engaging young people. Youth Ambassadors from the charity sit on the Independent Advisory Group for the Met and are involved in training in schools and with the police.

Andrei Ilie: is also a Youth Ambassador and he said that negative feelings towards the police are often carried by young people. He felt that the initial interaction between a young person and the police is key. He stated that he felt race, religion, gender and being NEET were all major issues and meant young people were more likely to be targeted by police. Importantly, it didn't matter if these young people were more likely to be targeted, but if they *felt* like they were being targeted then this will create a negative feeling towards the police.

Matt Sharp: is a Youth Ambassador and he explained that communication is key, particularly in stop and search. If the communication can be improved, this improves everything, and this is what they advise police officers during the training sessions they run.

Earl of Listowel: asked whether police officers get training in child development.

Liz Stanton: mentioned a recent event in Cheshire on this topic, and another one happening next year.

David Storey: said that as far as he recalled he had received no formal training prior to his current role.

Kate Smith: said that child development was part of the Safer London Foundation's training programme.

Andrei Ilie: explained that the training by Safer London Foundation is delivered and designed by young people. He said that some police officers have been very receptive to it and others have been hostile.

Baroness Howarth opened the questions up to the wider audience.

Questions included whether the police should be seen as a very separate group from teachers and social workers, for example, and the current policy position on the Safer Schools Partnership.

Jacqui Cheer: explained that the police were indeed in a unique position as they had to be partial and there were strict rules about what they could and could not do. However, lobbying did occur through ACPO. She also clarified that there was no national policy. The Safer Schools Partnership was encouraged as good practice but the 43 forces made their own decisions about what to spend money on.

Baroness Howarth: asked what one thing would make a difference to the work the speakers do.

Andrew Pilbury: said that his school were very lucky to have PC Storey and that he has brought in the right attitude.

Dominic Rogers: believed we had to change our approach and listen to young people. He said that politicians say young people are the future but they aren't listened to, and yet they have some of the best ideas. He felt that young people know what they want, but the problem is adult attitudes towards them.

Josh Roberts and **Michael Brookes:** agreed with this.

Andrei Ilie and **Matt Sharp:** concluded by saying that they felt there needed to be more effort from both sides to bridge the gap between young people and the police and recognition of the need for change.

Baroness Howarth: concluded that the inquiry was very timely given the upcoming Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill and she thanked all of the speakers and the attendees.