

Youth Violence Commission

Briefing Note for 26 February Evidence Session on Early Years, Education and Employment

Key areas for the Commission. The Commission is particularly keen to hear from practitioners, experts and young people. The questions asked, will include:

- What role can early years support play in reducing levels of youth violence?
- What role do you think schools/colleges/education settings can play in a public health model based on cross departmental planning and working?
- What gaps in resources and training in schools/colleges/education settings do you feel impact negatively on their ability to address youth violence?
- In Scotland, the Violence Reduction Unit argue that a move to a zero exclusion policy across all schools was central to their approach. Do you think that moving to a zero exclusion policy nationwide is possible?
- What are your views on the use of increased surveillance/security techniques in education settings, such as searching and scanning and knife arches?
- Do you have examples of best practice from your own experience that could be replicated nationally?
- To what extent is the education system equipping young people with the necessary skills to succeed in the employment market?
- How can we incentivise young people to train for the world of work, rather than getting involved in gang/drug related activities, especially when their pay is likely to be low and they don't see the role models who've succeeded out there?
- For young people who have been involved in violence, what do you see as the greatest barriers they face to gaining qualifications and employment?
- How can policy-makers best support employers to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds?

It is worth noting that in previous evidence sessions held by this Commission many issues relating to early years and education have already emerged as key issues. In particular, witnesses have stressed the significance of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on a person's development. The Commission has learnt that a person who experiences four or more ACEs is 10 times more likely to be involved in violence by the time they are 18, compared to a young person who hasn't experienced any. The extent to which schools can play a vital role in violence reduction has also been raised, but with the recognition that for this to be effective all staff - and ideally parents - need to be involved and fully cognisant of the underlying factors.

Education and Exclusions

The most recent overview of programmes in schools to help prevent youth violence, was provided by Nick Gibb, Minister of State for Schools, in response to a PQ by Vicky Foxcroft in 2017. These included:

- The Home Office, January 2016 *Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation Approach*¹, which includes a focus on school attendance as a priority for every student.
- The Home Office, March 2016 *Modern Crime Prevention Strategy*², which includes collaboration with the DfE on delivery of prevention messages in schools and training of staff in these matters.
- PSHE lessons in schools, for which official guidance suggests the inclusion of learning about gangs and violence within relationships. It is worth noting, however, that PHSE lessons are non-statutory and it is largely up to schools to determine what is taught. Concerns about the quality of PHSE provision have been raised by Ofsted and others.

In 2015, the Home Office commissioned research by the Early Intervention Fund on what works to prevent gang involvement, youth violence and crime³ drawing on evidence from the UK and abroad. One of the findings was: “Most of the effective programmes were school-based or family-focused, and involved skills practice, parent training, or therapy. These programmes often took wider risk factors into consideration such as peer groups and family problems...” (p13)

Exclusions

The DfE publishes annual statistics on permanent and fixed-period exclusions. The table at Appendix A shows exclusions by reason in all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools in England in 2015-16. In total, 37% of permanent exclusions and 45% of fixed period exclusions during this period involved physical abuse, verbal abuse or threatening behaviour. The statistics do not report the number of exclusions involving possession of a weapon.

The DfE also publishes statistics on exclusion rates by deprivation, using eligibility for free school meals as a measure of deprivation (these figures are only reported for England as a whole). The table at Appendix B shows permanent and fixed exclusions in all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools in England in 2015-16 broken down by pupils who were eligible for free school meals at any point during the last six years. Permanent exclusions of pupils eligible for free school meals were 0.23% of such pupils compared to 0.04% of pupils not eligible for free school meals. Similarly, fixed period exclusions of pupils eligible for free school meals were 11.1% compared to 2.3% of pupils not eligible for free school meals.

In October 2017, IPPR published a report on the link between school exclusion and social exclusion⁴. Its findings included, “Excluded children are the most vulnerable: twice as likely to be in the care of the state, four times more likely to have grown up in poverty, seven times more likely to have a special educational need and ten times more likely to suffer recognised mental health problems. Yet our education system is profoundly ill-equipped to break a cycle of disadvantage for these young people.”

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ending-gang-violence-and-exploitation>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-crime-prevention-strategy>

³ <http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/preventing-gang-and-youth-violence/>

⁴ <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-10/making-the-difference-summary-october-2017.pdf>

And in November 2017 the Children’s Commissioner for England published a report on children who fall through the gaps in our education system ⁵. Her key findings included:

- Tens of thousands of children are educated outside mainstream or special schools. Many are effectively ‘hidden’ away in settings where little is known about how well their needs are being met.
- Many of these children are also vulnerable and in need of extra help.
- Official exclusions are rising, but many children are also being excluded by the back door through ‘hidden’ or unofficial exclusions
- In some cases, children could be moved out of mainstream schools for reasons that are more in the school’s interest than the child’s
- Some children, including highly vulnerable ones, are not in education at all.
- In many cases, existing statistics are unable to tell the full story.

The DfE does not collect statistics on hidden or illegal exclusions.

The table at Appendix C shows the number of pupils in pupil referral units (PRUs) and in alternative provision from 2011 to 2017.

Education Services in Youth Custody

Every young person in custody is entitled to access to education and training activities. The MoJ announced in December 2014 that in 4 youth offending institutions designated for children under 18 (Cookham Wood, Werrington, Wetherby, and Feltham) young offenders would receive 30 hours of education a week.

The quality of education provision has, however, come under increasing scrutiny and criticism. In his Review of the Youth Justice System in England and Wales⁶, Charlie Taylor states: “Children who are incarcerated must receive the highest quality education from outstanding professionals to repair the damage caused by a lack of engagement and patchy attendance. Perhaps the most worrying finding is that in youth custodial establishments I have rarely encountered the culture of aspiration and discipline which is evident in the best alternative provision schools, and whose pupils share many of the characteristics of children who are incarcerated.” The final report, published in December 2016, noted that on average children in custody are receiving only 15 hours of education or training.

Similarly, a September 2016 report from the Prison Education Trust⁷ - [Great Expectations: towards better learning outcomes for young people and young adults in custody](#) - calls, amongst many other things, for an urgent review of the new 30 hour contracts in the Young People’s Estate.

Young People and Employment

790,000 people aged 16-24 were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the second quarter of 2017, which is 11.1% of all people in this age group. This was the same level as in the previous quarter and down 65,000 from the third quarter of 2016.

⁵ <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/BRIEFING-Falling-through-the-gaps-in-education-CCO.pdf>

⁶ Taylor Report, December 2016 [Review of the Youth Justice System in England and Wales](#)

⁷ <http://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/data/files/Great%20Expectations%20Report.pdf>

DfE's Longitudinal Study of Young People⁸ found that participants with certain characteristics were more likely to be NEET. For each of the following groups, over half were NEET at some point between the ages of 16 and 19, and over a quarter were NEET for at least a year:

- Those with their own child.
- Those who been permanently excluded or suspended from school.
- Those who hadn't achieved 5+ A*-C GCSE grades.
- Those who were eligible for free school meals.

It also found that disabled people were more than twice as likely to have been NEET at the time of the study than those without a disability.

The Audit Commission produced a report in July 2010, *Against the Odds*⁹, which examined NEET characteristics. It summarises the increased likelihood of young people becoming NEET associated with certain risk factors:

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Increased Chance of being NEET</i>
Being NEET at least once before	7.9 times more likely
Pregnancy or parenthood	2.8 times more likely
Supervision by youth offending team	2.6 times more likely
Fewer than three months post-16 education	2.3 times more likely
Disclosed substance abuse	2.1 times more likely
Responsibilities as a carer	2.0 times more likely

There are numerous government-funded schemes in place to help young people become employable. A comprehensive list of these is included in the House of Commons library briefing note on Young People not in Education, Employment or Training.¹⁰ The schemes fall into four categories:

- Encouraging young people to continue in education or training
- Helping young people to acquire the skills for sustained employment
- Improving the employability of disadvantaged young people
- Support for unemployed young people

The table below shows the level of government funding in training programmes that aim to develop skills for young people. (This includes some programmes that also support people aged over 25). The training programmes have changed from year to year, making it difficult to produce a clear time series of investment. The exact components of each of the training programmes have also changed over time. For these reasons the sum of each column should not be calculated to produce the total level of funding in training programmes for each year.

⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/219058/b01-2011v2.pdf
July 2011

⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/audit-commission>

¹⁰ <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06705>

Government investment in training programmes that develop skills for young people

Millions

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Adult skills (19+, excluding apprenticeship)	2,418	2,338	2,404	2,544	2,669	2,500	2,069	1,863	1,716	1,532	1,140
Community Learning	229	201	223	214	211	210	210	210	211	210	215
Offender Learning	35	101	116	139	141	146	149	146	145	135	142
Learner Support	175	195	125	100	119	120	130	144	155	160	133
Careers Service	95	90	59	80	89	63	69	74	93	85	61
Traineeships	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	17	21
Employer Ownership of Skills programme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33	61	48
European Social Fund	258	295	293	161	238	297	98	129	155	245	196

Sources:

2005/06 to 2008/09: Learning and Skills Council annual reports

2009/10 to 2015/16: SFA, *Annual report and accounts*

2016/17 and 2017/18: Skills Funding letter April 2017 to March 2018

Notes:

Expenditure programmes reflect those in the SFA 2015 to 2016 accounts - the exact components of the programmes will have changed over time

For years prior to 2015/16 the table may omit some areas of training

The table below shows the levels of funding that the government has invested in apprenticeships since 2005 as well as the level of funding that is available for 2017/18.

Apprenticeships budget

£ millions - Financial years (1 April - 31 March) - England

Age of apprentice	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18*
16-18	590	588	604	630	688	751	762	673	712	771	785	804	854
19+	232	217	229	347	384	451	625	756	737	772	748	1,005	1,156
Total apprenticeships budget	822	805	833	977	1,072	1,202	1,389	1,435	1,487	1,543	1,533	1,809	2,010

Sources: 2005/06 to 2008/09: Learning and Skills Council annual reports

2009/10 to 2015/16: SFA, *Annual report and accounts*

2016/17 and 2017/18: Skills Funding letter April 2017 to March 2018

Notes: * Funding available

There are a wealth of organisations that provide training in skills to young people, many of which will be local and operating in specific areas. Nationwide organisations include:

The Prince's Trust – provides free training on a number of schemes to 16-30 year olds.

The Shaw Trust – works with the DWP and local government to deliver employment programmes across the UK.

Young Enterprise – aims to connect school and work through a range of programmes targeted for every year in education from primary through to further education.

Learndirect – claim to be the UK's largest provider of skills, training and employment services, mostly fee paying.

Some related literature/reports/resources

Early Intervention Foundation, November 2015, Preventing Gang and Youth Violence
<http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/preventing-gang-and-youth-violence/>

IPPR Making The Difference: Breaking the link between school exclusion and social exclusion, October 2017 <https://www.ippr.org/publications/making-the-difference>

HoC Library Briefing paper, December 2017 NEET: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06705/SN06705.pdf>

Prisoner's Education Trust <http://www.prisonerseducation.org.uk/what-we-do>

Government White Paper, November 2016 [Prison Safety and Reform](#)

Taylor Report, December 2016 [Review of the Youth Justice System in England and Wales](#)

Ofsted inspections <https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisons/our-expectations/prison-expectations/purposeful-activity/education-skills-and-work-activities-ofsted/>

Apex Trust <http://www.apextrust.com/>

Appendix A

PERMANENT AND FIXED PERIOD EXCLUSIONS BY REASON FOR EXCLUSION

State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools, 2015-16

Exclusions	Number	Percentage of exclusions (A)	Rate (B)
Permanent exclusions (C)	6,685	100.0%	0.08%
Physical assault against a pupil	825	12.3%	0.01%
Physical assault against an adult	730	10.9%	0.01%
Verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against a pupil	315	4.7%	0.00%
Verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against an adult	600	9.0%	0.01%
Bullying	40	0.6%	0.00%
Racist abuse	15	0.2%	0.00%
Sexual misconduct	70	1.0%	0.00%
Drug and alcohol related	525	7.9%	0.01%
Damage	90	1.3%	0.00%
Theft	45	0.6%	0.00%
Persistent disruptive behaviour	2,310	34.6%	0.03%
Other	1,125	16.8%	0.01%
Fixed period exclusions	339,360	100.0%	4.29%
Physical assault against a pupil	59,880	17.6%	0.76%
Physical assault against an adult	23,440	6.9%	0.30%
Verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against a pupil	13,960	4.1%	0.18%
Verbal abuse/ threatening behaviour against an adult	56,315	16.6%	0.71%
Bullying	3,750	1.1%	0.05%
Racist abuse	4,085	1.2%	0.05%
Sexual misconduct	2,070	0.6%	0.03%
Drug and alcohol related	8,725	2.6%	0.11%
Damage	6,800	2.0%	0.09%
Theft	4,000	1.2%	0.05%
Persistent disruptive behaviour	94,025	27.7%	1.19%
Other	62,315	18.4%	0.79%

Notes

Please see the full table in the associated spreadsheet file for the detailed notes to this table.

Source

[DfE, Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2015 to 2016](#)

Appendix B

PERMANENT AND FIXED PERIOD EXCLUSIONS BY FREE SCHOOL MEAL ELIGIBILITY IN THE LAST SIX YEARS (A)

State-funded primary, state-funded secondary and special schools

	Number	Rate (B)
Permanent exclusions		
Known to be eligible for FSM	4,305	0.23%
Not eligible for FSM	1,885	0.04%
Unclassified (C)	495	0.07%
All pupils (D)	6,685	0.08%
Fixed period exclusions		
Known to be eligible for FSM	211,030	11.06%
Not eligible for FSM	122,030	2.33%
Unclassified (C)	6,300	0.83%
All pupils (D)	339,360	4.29%
Pupil enrolments with one or more fixed period exclusion		
Known to be eligible for FSM	95,130	4.99%
Not eligible for FSM	67,795	1.29%
Unclassified (C)	4,200	0.55%
All pupils (D)	167,125	2.11%

Notes

Please see the full table in the associated spreadsheet for the detailed notes to this table.

Source

[DfE, Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2015 to 2016](#)

Appendix C

NUMBER OF PUPILS IN PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS, ALTERNATIVE PROVISION, OR DUAL REGISTERED (A, B)

As at January of each year, 2010-16

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pupil Referral Unit (A, B)	14,050	13,495	12,950	12,895	13,583	15,015	15,669
Full-time							
Boys	9,695	9,435	9,080	8,970	9,620	10,592	11,277
Girls	4,075	4,050	3,870	3,915	3,960	4,415	4,384
Part-time							
Boys	190	-	-	5	3	2	0
Girls	90	10	0	-	0	6	8
Alternative Provision (B, C)	23,020	22,130	22,205	20,215	20,503	22,032	22,212
Boys	17,165	16,045	16,300	15,020	15,422	16,616	16,904
Girls	5,840	6,065	5,895	5,110	5,069	5,416	5,304
Dual Registered	9,125	9,145	9,425	9,685	10,205	10,424	10,152

Notes

(A) Includes pupils who are sole or dual main registrations. Includes pupils in alternative provision academies and alternative provision free schools. Includes boarding pupils and pupils registered in other providers and further education colleges.

(B) Information on registration status is not collected for pupils in alternative provision.

(C) Includes pupils with gender not known or not specified.

1. A dash ("-") indicates one or two pupils.

2. Pupil numbers are numbers rounded to the nearest five in years before 2015.

Source

[DfE, Statistics: school and pupil numbers, 2011 to 2017](#)

The Youth Violence Commission – Background

Following a debate in Parliament, a Cross Party Commission was launched in 2017 to examine the root causes of youth violence in England, Scotland and Wales. The Commission is consulting young people and working with academics and practitioners to better understand how serious violence manifests itself in many young people's lives. The Commission has the support of MPs from across political parties, but it is not funded by Government, nor is it an All Party Parliamentary Group. It will produce a written report with policy recommendations to address serious, youth violence issues.

Commissioners

- Vicky Foxcroft, Chair of the Commission, Labour Lewisham Deptford
- Chuka Umunna, Labour Streatham
- James Cleverly, Conservative, Braintree
- Mark Field, Conservative, Cities of London & Westminster
- Chris Stephens, SNP, Glasgow South West

Evidence Sessions

The Commission will run several Evidence Sessions to gather views and insights of experts, practitioners and young people. The first three of these will be:

- 16 October 2017: Youth and Community
- 11 December 2017: Public Health and Mental Health
- 26 February 2018: Early Years, Education and Employability

Further sessions will take place in 2018, including on the following themes:

- Housing, Communities, Relationships and Faith Groups
- Media, music and role models
- Policing and Criminal Justice

Safer Lives Survey

The Safer Lives Survey is being conducted in January/February 2018 and will ask young people about the levels of violence that they are exposed to in their everyday lives. It will be the first national survey of young people's views on these important issues. It will provide an underlying evidence base for the Commission and will ensure that young people's views are central to its work. A second stage, to include an online version, is being considered for later in 2018.

Scotland – sharing good practice

The Youth Violence Commission is in contact with the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) in Glasgow. This has included a fact-finding visit in early October 2017. The VRU is a police and government unit which tackles violence by working with partners to achieve long-term societal and attitudinal change. The VRU's adoption of a public health approach to violence has had outstanding positive outcomes.