

## Youth Violence Commission

### Briefing Note for 26 March evidence session on Housing, Communities and Faith

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

- To what extent and in what ways are young people's lives affected by the quantity and quality of housing in the UK?
- Do housing associations make best use of community/tenant centres?
- Do you think the design of housing estates can make communities more or less safe? Is there a correlation between poor design and levels of crime?
- Inequality and a lack of social mobility have emerged as significant factors in previous evidence sessions of this Commission. What, if any, solutions do housing experts see to these difficult problems?
- How can communities better support young people and help reduce the likelihood of serious violence? Could closer working between housing providers, local communities, the police and other agencies help to reduce crime affecting young people?
- Serious violence, including domestic violence, often goes unreported in communities but can have serious, long-term consequences for young people, their wellbeing and development. How can organisations make it easier for people affected by violence to speak out and seek help?
- What role can faith groups play in addressing violence between young people and could they be doing more in local communities, working with police and other agencies, especially in known areas of conflict?

It is worth noting that in previous evidence sessions held by this Commission many issues relevant to this theme have already emerged. In particular, witnesses have stressed that:

- the causes of youth violence are numerous and complex and involve all areas of young peoples' lives, including: poverty and inequality, factors specific to where they live as well as experiences at home, in their neighbourhoods and the wider world around them,
- adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have a significant impact on a person's development, including violence that they suffer themselves or witness happening to others,
- youth violence cannot be solved by the criminal justice system in isolation – solutions must involve a multi-agency approach and have the support of communities, families and the third sector.

## Housing

*Government funding in social housing* - according to the UK Housing Review 2017 from the Chartered Institute of Housing<sup>1</sup>, gross public funding in social housing in the UK over the last 10 years peaked in 2009/10 at over £10 billion. Since then it fell to under £6 billion in 2012/13 before recovering slightly to £6.5 billion in 2015/16. According to the annual English Housing survey<sup>2</sup> published in 2017, more than half a million social homes in England - almost one in seven - fail to meet basic health and safety standards<sup>3</sup>. Of these, 244,000 properties are deemed to have the highest category of risk, which includes potentially fatal hazards such as exposed wiring, overloaded electricity sockets, dangerous boilers, leaking roofs, vermin infestations or inadequate security. The Grenfell Tower tragedy prompted a wider debate on the standard of social housing blocks across the country.<sup>4</sup>

*Youth homelessness* - In England, figures on housing waiting lists are collated annually by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The latest figures show that there were 1.16 million households on local authority waiting lists on 1 April 2017, a decrease of 2% on the 1.18 million on 1 April 2016. Official statistics are focussed on households who are “statutorily homeless”, i.e. households for whom local authorities have accepted responsibility in a particular time period. The statistics usually do not, therefore, include people who are rough sleeping at any point in time.

Extracts from the official homeless data show that, of the 59,110 households that were accepted as homeless by local authorities in England in 2017, the characteristics of the main applicants in the households were:

- 20% were aged 16-24 years old
- 47% were lone females with at least one dependent child
- 61% were white, 16% black, 9% Asian, 3% mixed and 11% other or not stated

The datasets from which these have been drawn can be downloaded in Excel from the MHCLG’s live tables on homelessness.<sup>5</sup>

LGBT people are not separately identified in the official homelessness data but research published in 2015 stated that: LGBT young people are more likely to find themselves homeless than their non-LGBT peers, are more likely to have experienced familiar rejection, abuse and violence and, whilst homeless, are more likely to experience targeted violence, sexual exploitation, substance misuse, and physical and mental health problems than other homeless youth.

In the Autumn Budget 2017, the Chancellor announced a package of new reforms to increase housing supply. The package included over £15 billion of financial support for house building over the next five years, as well as reforms aiming to make more land available for housing.<sup>6</sup> Earlier this month (March 2018) members of the cross-party housing, communities and local government select committee discovered that £817m

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ukhousingreview.org.uk/ukhr17/index.html](http://www.ukhousingreview.org.uk/ukhr17/index.html)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2015-to-2016-headline-report>

<sup>3</sup> [https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing\\_advice/repairs/what\\_counts\\_as\\_a\\_decent\\_home](https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/repairs/what_counts_as_a_decent_home)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bigissue.com/news/grenfell-tower-fire-social-housing-tenants/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-homelessness>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/building-the-homes-the-country-needs-autumn-budget-2017-brief>

which had been allocated for affordable housing and other projects in local authorities has been returned to the Treasury unspent.

*Designing out crime* - “Design out Crime” was a specific programme established by the Home Office’s Design and Technology Alliance against Crime and the Design Council, which ran from 2008 to 2010. (See links to Design Council publications below.) Unfortunately, there is very little information/analysis in the public domain on the effectiveness of these schemes, where they have been implemented. The National Planning Policy Framework, however, which sets out the Government’s planning policies for England does say that local and neighbourhood plans should aim to ensure that developments “create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion” (at para 58)<sup>7</sup>. In addition, “Secured by Design”, is a police-run accreditation scheme that provides guidance on crime prevention measures to those who specify, design and build new developments (including residential and non-residential).

## Communities

The idea of “community cohesion” as a standalone policy area first emerged in 2001 following riots in a number of northern towns. The website of Professor Ted Cante - a leading authority on community cohesion and intercultural relations - provides a useful overview of the development of community cohesion from 2001 to 2017 and includes links to further material<sup>8</sup>.

On 14 March 2018, the Government published an Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper<sup>9</sup> The Green Paper sets out the Government’s vision for building strong, integrated communities and invites responses from individuals, communities and organisations about the most effective ways to address integration challenges.

On 16 March 2018, The Mayor of London announced London’s first social integration strategy, which includes a “Family Fund” to help parents across the city build social networks and support each other.<sup>10</sup>

## Faith

The 2009-10 citizenship survey<sup>11</sup> asked those who identified themselves as belonging to various religions if they practised their faith or not. The survey does not provide figures for Judaism. Percentages are not shown for groups of less than 30 people.

Proportion practising their faith: aged 16-29 2005-2010					
	Christian	Muslim	Hinduism	Sikhism	Buddhism
2005	19	68	70	68	**
2007/8	22	75	65	75	59
2008/9	21	78	67	60	45
2009/10	23	80	68	69	**

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://tedcandle.co.uk/about-community-cohesion/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/sadiq-launches-the-london-family-fund>

<sup>11</sup> <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120919214026/http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/statistics/pdf/2056245.pdf>

Data from the British Social Attitudes (BSA) in 2017 showed a record number of Brits with no religious affiliation and highlighted that, “The fall in religious affiliation has been driven, at least in part, by young people. In 2016, seven in ten (71%) of young people aged 18 - 24 said they had no religion, up from 62% in 2015.”<sup>12</sup>

Faith-based charities in England and Wales are a significant part (27%) of the charity sector. Analysis of funding of the faith-based charity sector is available in the *Faith Matters: Understanding the Size, Income, and Focus of Faith-Based Charities* report published by the NPC in 2016.<sup>13</sup> The report suggests that over three financial years ending 31 March 2015, 23% (£16.3bn) of the charity sector’s income in England and Wales was received by faith-based charities. Much like trends in the charity sector as a whole, this income is concentrated in relatively few, large organisations. £13.0bn (80%) of the total income went to 1,719 organisations with incomes over £1m per year. The remaining £3.3 billion is shared by over 41,000 charities. The report also provides information on the areas of activity broken down by faith and non-faith based charities:

Number and proportion of faith-based charities in each area of work

Focus Area	Faith Based	Non Faith Based	Total	Faith based (%)	Non Faith (%)
Overseas aid	5,763	6,082	11,845	49%	51%
Human rights	1,774	2,127	3,901	45%	55%
Poverty	12,601	19,810	32,411	39%	61%
Housing	3,168	6,337	9,505	33%	67%
Other charitable purposes	14,769	42,753	57,522	26%	74%
Education and training	20,858	66,567	87,425	24%	76%
Community development	5,046	16,754	21,800	23%	77%
Health	6,123	22,240	28,363	22%	78%
Environment and heritage	3,839	15,432	19,271	20%	80%
Armed forces	152	651	803	19%	81%
Arts and culture	5,571	24,673	30,244	18%	82%
Disability	3,812	17,460	21,272	18%	82%
Recreation	1,855	9,266	11,121	17%	83%
Sport	4,877	24,721	29,598	16%	84%

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/news-media/press-releases/2017/september/british-social-attitudes-record-number-of-brits-with-no-religion/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.thinknpc.org/publications/faith-matters/>

Animals	594	3,614	4,208	14%	86%
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(Page 9 of the Faith Matters report)

### Domestic abuse

Until early 2013, the cross-government definition of “domestic violence and abuse” (first introduced in 2004) was limited to violence and abuse between adults. The current definition, is “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.” The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional.

The Government’s Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2016 – 2020<sup>14</sup> includes the following comment on young people, “The age at which an individual starts to experience or witness abuse or to access material which might influence behaviour and beliefs as an adult is crucial. There is evidence that experiencing adversity in childhood, including violence and abuse, can impact on health and well-being and, in some cases, lead to a higher risk of becoming a victim or perpetrator of violence as an adult.”

The strategy also states that educating young people about healthy relationships, abuse and consent is critical, including via PSHE sessions in schools, targeted campaigns for teenagers and challenging negative gender stereotypes from a very early age.

According to ONS figures<sup>15</sup> based on results from the Crime Survey of England and Wales, 9.9% of respondents aged 16-19 and 16% of those aged 20-24 had been the victim of partner abuse in 2016/17.

### Troubled Families Programme

There have been two phases to the TFP. Phase one was between 2012 and 2015. During this timeframe, the Government provided local authorities with an indicative number of troubled families in their area, based on population and indices of deprivation and child well-being. The estimated total of families to be targeted in England was 120,000 families. Phase two (2015 – 2020) broadened the eligibility criteria to target an estimated 400,000 families. More details about the programme, including some of its contentious elements, can be found in the House of Commons Library paper<sup>16</sup>. A debate on the success of this programme continues and many reviews have been inconclusive on the direct impacts.

<sup>14</sup>[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/522166/VAWG\\_Strategy\\_FINAL\\_PUBLICATION\\_MASTER\\_vRB.PDF](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/522166/VAWG_Strategy_FINAL_PUBLICATION_MASTER_vRB.PDF)

<sup>15</sup><https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/domesticabuseinenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2017>

<sup>16</sup><http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7585>

## Literature/reports/resources

### Housing

LGBT Youth: Homelessness: A UK National Scoping of Cause, Prevalence, Response and Outcome, 2015 <https://www.akt.org.uk/research>

Design Council, Designing out crime: A designers' guide  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/integrated-communities-strategy-green-paper>

Design Council, Case studies: Examples of design being used to tackle crime problems around the world-  
[https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/DOC\\_case\\_studies\\_0.pdf](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/DOC_case_studies_0.pdf)

### Community

DfE, Young People and Community Cohesion, September 2010  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/181542/DFE-RR033.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/181542/DFE-RR033.pdf)

DCLG 'What Works' in Community Cohesion, June 2007  
<http://www.tedcandle.co.uk/publications/025%20What%20works%20in%20community%20cohesion%20Commission%20on%20Integrati.pdf>

Refuge, Support for Young people <https://www.refuge.org.uk/get-help-now/for-teenage-girls/>

Safe Lives, Practice Blog: Violence in young people's relationships – Reflections on two serious case reviews, 20 February 2017 [http://www.safelives.org.uk/practice\\_blog/violence-young-people's-relationships---reflections-two-serious-case-reviews](http://www.safelives.org.uk/practice_blog/violence-young-people's-relationships---reflections-two-serious-case-reviews)

Ecorys, National evaluation of the first Troubled Families Programme 2012 to 2015, October 2016.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-evaluation-of-the-first-troubled-families-programme>

Carol Hayden and Craig Jenkins, 'Troubled Families' Programme in England: 'wicked problems' and policy-based evidence, 2014  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01442872.2014.971732?needAccess=true>

### Faith

Faith Matters: Understanding the Size, Income, and Focus of Faith-Based Charities report published by the NPC, June 2016 <https://www.thinknpc.org/publications/faith-matters/>

## **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 was conducted in January/February 2018 and asked young people about the levels of violence that they are exposed to in their everyday lives. It is 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. Over 2000 responses were received and the results are being analysed and will be reported later in April 2018. 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.