

FAMILY POLICY GROUP: HOME OFFICE PAPER ON CRIME

Attached is a Home Office paper which summarises the main research findings on crime and its reduction. Its main findings are as follows:

(i) Scale of the Problem

Although there are three million crimes recorded annually, the evidence suggests that the real level of crime is much higher, particularly in certain areas; for example, about half the burglaries and as many as three-quarters of woundings or sexual attacks are not reported. Nevertheless, England and Wales are still relatively safe countries; the average householder will be burgled only once in thirty years while the average car owner will have his car taken only once in fifty years. The risks are, of course, much higher in the inner cities.

(ii) Causes of Crime

There is no one cause of crime. Crime is associated with a poor family environment; there is some evidence that school organisation and regime may affect delinquency; and inner city areas with high unemployment are associated with high rates of crime. But on the last point, note that some of the steepest increases in crime have occurred in times of full employment.

(iii) Social Policies

High crime is not inevitable; Japan and Switzerland for example have low crime rates. But there is no clear set of policies which has been demonstrated to reduce crime.

(iv) Criminal Justice System

The paper concludes that there is no evidence that any available sentencing policy has a predictable effect upon individual crime or crime generally. There is no evidence for example that prison has any deterrent or any rehabilitative effect; similarly, there is no evidence that "therapeutic" regimes are any more effective than conventional or even punitive ones, and there is very little evidence that probation, community service, etc., produce any better results. What does have an effect is the deterrent value of the likelihood of being caught, which suggests a greater concentration on police effectiveness.

(v) Prevention

All this pessimism about the possibility of affecting crime rates directly by policy leads the paper to suggest much greater emphasis on prevention. Indeed, one of the main reasons for increased crime in the modern world is the greatly increased number of opportunities for crime. There are, for example, simply more cars to steal; and supermarkets are easier to steal from than the old-fashioned corner shop. Paragraph 17 of the Home Office paper sets out the kinds of area where action is possible.

All this may seem rather negative, but from my experience of prison service I would endorse the paper's pessimism about the likelihood of affecting behaviour through the sentencing system. I have increasingly come to hold the view that we should abandon the notion that sentencing is somehow about affecting behaviour and return to the idea that it is first about the punishment fitting the crime, and second about protecting society. Prison may be very bad at changing people for the better, but it is very good at protecting society against violent criminals; no prisoner has escaped from a high security prison for ten years.

Do you agree that I may circulate the Home Office paper,
possibly with a view to discussion later in the New Year?

TF.

2 December 1982

REDUCING CRIME: THE FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

A note prepared by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit in consultation with other Departments.

This note summarises research findings about crime, its causes and its reduction. It covers not only measures involving the criminal justice system, but also considers broad social policies directed at the causes of crime and more specific preventive action designed to reduce criminal opportunities. The main conclusion is that the scope for reducing crime through changes to the criminal justice system itself is very limited. The impact of social policies (affecting, for example, the family, education or employment) upon crime is hard to predict and changes are difficult or slow to achieve. More hope at present seems to rest on opportunity-reducing measures aimed at specific types of crime.

2. The note is an overview of research, and while judgement is inevitably involved, an attempt has been made to apply strict standards of research evidence in reaching conclusions. The annex summarises a selection of key research studies bearing out the conclusions reached here.

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM

3. Before reviewing the findings, some of the background facts about crime should be noted. There are currently just under three million crimes recorded annually by the police in England and Wales, but social surveys of the general population suggest that very many more crimes occur than are recorded by the police. About half of all burglaries remain unrecorded and perhaps as many as three-quarters of woundings or sexual attacks. The official statistics suggest that current levels of crime are much greater than they were immediately after the war, but some of the apparent increase probably results from improved police record keeping, more police manpower and

greater public willingness to report crime. (In accounting for the remainder of the increase, broad social changes are likely to play an important part, though one should not overlook the greater opportunities for crime resulting from the vast expansion in the numbers of cars and other material goods).

4. Whatever the increases, the risks of falling victim to serious crime are still low in England and Wales, as they are in other West European countries. The average householder is likely to be burgled once in 30 years, while the average car owner will have his vehicle taken once in 50 years. However, the risks are not evenly distributed; they are much lower in rural areas and particularly high in the inner city. Only 5% of crimes recorded by the police involve confrontations, and contrary to popular belief the victims are much more likely to be young males than the infirm or the elderly. The remaining 95% of crimes are against property, and the vast majority involve small sums. Even two-thirds of burglaries involve losses under £100.

5. As for offenders, males aged 10-21 are the group most heavily involved in crime. They comprise about 40% of all offenders found guilty or cautioned, and a fifth of young males will have collected a criminal conviction by the age of 21. It has proved difficult to predict who amongst this group will go on to an adult criminal career, but the vast majority appear to have desisted entirely from crime by the time they reach their mid-twenties.

CAUSES OF CRIME

6. A large number of research projects have sought to establish the causes of crime and delinquency amongst the young and a wide range of factors concerned with particular kinds of family and social background have been implicated, though no single factor has emerged as being crucial. The main findings are as follows:

- (i) An important group of associations relate to the family and include parental criminality, family discord, lack of supervision and discipline, and poor relationships between children and parents.
- (ii) Areas of lower social status with high unemployment, especially in the inner city, are associated with high rates of delinquency and other social problems.
- (iii) There is limited evidence that school organisation and regime affect delinquency, though the academic balance of pupils may be more important. In addition, while no British research is available, there is limited American evidence to show that pre-school provision may reduce subsequent delinquency among disadvantaged groups.

7. As far as adults are concerned, the best predictor of criminal involvement is a history of juvenile crime. In addition, unemployment, heavy drinking and (in the USA) drug addiction are related to adult criminality. As for the ethnic dimension, it is beginning to emerge that some black teenagers and young men are disproportionately involved in a small group of crimes such as street robberies. This may reflect, in addition to the factors described above, the development of deviant sub-cultures within these ethnic groups in response to racial discrimination.

8. Criminologists have developed a number of theories in which some of these findings are interpreted. Some of the more prominent examples are: "alienation" perspectives which stress the disenchantment felt by those who, by virtue of their position in society, are unable to realise ordinary ambitions; "sub-cultural" theories which draw attention to the ways in which delinquent sub-cultures develop within particular communities and the group pressures by which individuals are drawn into these; "control" theories which implicate the lack of those ties between child and parent or other adults which usually result in conformity; and "labelling" perspectives which blame continued delinquency on the counter-productive effects of contact with the law.

SOCIAL POLICIES

9. These findings might seem to suggest a wealth of options for social policy; moreover, the low crime rates of Japan and Switzerland, for example, suggest that forms of social organisation less conducive to crime are possible even in developed countries. But precisely what to change about our own society is not clear. Though many associations have been demonstrated between crime and social factors, the causal links are obscure. For example, despite improved housing and generally higher standards of living since the war, rates of delinquency have not fallen (though this may be because the crucial factor is the relative rather than absolute level of deprivation). Also, though disproportionate numbers of those convicted are unemployed, it should be recognised that some of the steepest increases in crime have occurred at times of full employment. A final example: some people have explained the continuity of criminal behaviour from parents to child as the result of learned or inherited deficiencies within the family ("transmitted deprivation"), whilst others, on the same facts, see both the deficiencies and delinquent behaviour as the result of structural inequalities of wealth, education and so forth.

10. This uncertainty about the best course of action to pursue is part of the reason why recent programmes to promote community integration and to compensate for urban deprivation have produced little in the way of reductions in crime. (It is also true that crime prevention was not always a primary objective). Moreover, even where it is clear what needs to be done, applying the right economic and social policies effectively can be very difficult, so that their crime prevention benefits may be slow to materialise. For example, even with

relatively disadvantaged pupils, the tone within the school can reduce delinquency rates, but it is difficult and takes time to improve the tone of a school. Again, consistent discipline on the part of parents and concern for their children can help to reduce crime, but it is unclear how much more scope there is for government action to bring this about beyond the provision of advice and encouragement.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Treatment of offenders

11. Despite earlier optimism, it is now broadly accepted on the basis of a substantial body of research that existing approaches to rehabilitating or reforming offenders are ineffective. (Though some authorities advocate a continued search for more effective forms of treatment - see item 2 of the annex). Differing periods under treatment seem unrelated to the chances of reconviction; therapeutic custodial regimes appear to be no more effective than conventional or indeed punitive ones; and there is little evidence that non-custodial disposals - probation, community service and so forth - show any better results. These conclusions apply to juvenile and adult offenders alike (though "Intermediate Treatment" schemes are still the subject of evaluation). In explaining these negative findings, criminologists now suggest that the medical model of delinquency causation upon which "treatment" is premised is misplaced. As mentioned below, much crime may be best seen as the result not of deep-seated causes but of situational inducements and opportunities.

Deterrent sentencing.

12. If the sentence of the court - whether seen as treatment or punishment - appears to have little positive effect on its recipients, the threat of penal sanction might well have an effect on the population at large. Popular opinion would certainly hold that imprisonment - and the harsher the better -

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is/prerequisite for effective deterrence. However, there is no indication from the research evidence that the deterrent effect increases with the severity of punishment, and, indeed, it seems to be the likelihood of being caught that affects crime rates rather than the precise nature or severity of punishment. Furthermore, the precise extent of this deterrent effect depends on the circumstances in which offences take place and the kind of people involved.

13. An alternative view of deterrent sentencing - which might be termed "expressive" sentencing - is that the sentence imposed, and where relevant the conditions under which it is served, must be an appropriate expression of society's condemnation of offending and of the particular offence. In the long run, this condemnation will affect the moral climate in which decisions to offend are taken. This is a view which neither sentencing practice nor penal policy can overlook, but it does not lend itself easily to quantitative investigation.

Keeping offenders out of circulation.

14. Even if prison sentences fail to deter or rehabilitate, it can still be argued that they reduce crime simply by keeping offenders out of circulation. Studies examining the incapacitation effects of imprisonment - the amount of crime that is prevented by imprisoning offenders - suggest that a large amount of even serious crime is committed by undetected offenders and that, in practice, substantial gains in the reduction of crime could only be achieved at an impossibly high cost for the prison system.

Policing.

15. No one would doubt that the police have a major effect on levels of crime, but a substantial body of research indicates that there is no obvious way in which this effect can be enhanced, at least within acceptable cost.

In particular, it is becoming clear that the effectiveness of the "core" of policing - preventive patrol and criminal investigation - cannot be significantly improved by increased manning levels. Certainly, "saturation" patrolling may achieve short-term reductions in crime, but only at very heavy cost -- both financial and in terms of relations between police and public. It is true that notorious crimes can sometimes be cleared up by very intensive detective effort, but this kind of investment would never be feasible for the vast majority of those crimes which at present go undetected. Changes in styles of policing, as exemplified by "community policing" schemes may have more to offer. At present there is no hard evidence either way but research in progress may clarify the situation.

Diversion from the criminal justice system.

16. Mounting evidence about the ineffectiveness of the criminal justice system has led to demands for minimising the involvement of offenders in the machinery of formal justice. These "diversionary" policies are advocated not only to lighten the load on the criminal justice system, but because of the belief that premature involvement with the system, particularly for juvenile offenders, can precipitate a criminal career. There is some, though not conclusive, research evidence that "giving a dog a bad name" can have the unfortunate effects posited by the so-called "labelling" theorists. However, diversionary policies can have unintended consequences; for example, one of the results of the wider use of the police system of formal warning - i.e. cautioning - was that juveniles who had previously been dealt with completely informally are now increasingly drawn into the net of formal law enforcement with the consequent risk of labelling that this implies.

SITUATIONAL PREVENTION

17. Both the machinery of criminal justice and prevention policies involving social change are aimed at reducing criminal motivation. Recent criminological theory focuses, however, not only upon motivation but also upon the situational

determinants of offending, including the opportunities for crime. The "situational" approach to crime prevention being developed within the Home Office is premised on the assumption that some sorts of crime can be reduced through the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in which crime occurs. It involves a systematic attempt to reduce opportunities for specific crimes, and examples of effective situational prevention include: vandal-resistant design and materials, improved lighting, closed-circuit television surveillance, screening of airline passengers and baggage, the control of alcohol sales at football matches, cheque guarantee cards, reducing the number of large cash transactions, supervision of children's play on housing estates, "defensible space" architecture, and the employment of caretakers, doormen or additional shop assistants. Research findings now to hand suggest that at present the development of situational prevention affords the best prospect for the reduction of crime. There are, however, considerable difficulties of implementation. While it may be obvious what should be done to reduce opportunities, it is frequently difficult to persuade the people or organisations concerned to take the necessary action. The costs of action may be high in relation to the benefits; the necessary measures may be construed as inconvenient or intrusive (though in practice these problems are usually surmountable); and where a number of agencies (public or private) are involved it can be difficult to achieve the necessary co-ordination.

ANNEX: SELECTED RESEARCH STUDIES

This annex includes a selection of what are considered key research studies relating to the reduction of crime. The selection attempts to be representative rather than comprehensive. Mention should also be made here of two further books: a review of the DHSS/SSRC research programme on transmitted deprivation has just been published under the title "Despite the Welfare State", by M Brown and N Madge; and a number of Home Office studies on "situational" prevention have been published in book form as "Designing Out Crime" (HMSO, 1980).

1. Crime Control in Japan. William Clifford (Lexington Books, 1976)
This book examines why, when crimes have been increasing with the growth of urbanisation and industrialisation in almost every other country, the trend in Japan at least until the early 1970's was actually reversed. (There is now some indication of a rise in crime). Clifford's analysis shows that the Japanese success cannot be put down simply to the legal system, the prisons and the police, which are all organised basically on Western lines. Nor are the patterns of social, economic and industrial organisation dissimilar from elsewhere. Rather, Clifford emphasises the distinctive Japanese culture - in particular, loyalty to the community, the predominance of group rather than individualistic values, and willingness to adhere to tight codes of conduct. Against this background, some of the apparently effective ingredients of social control are: informal action taken by local communities to deal with offenders without resort to the law; a high level of public involvement in crime prevention and volunteer work with offenders; close links between the police and the public which contribute to a high 'clear up' rate; the organisation of the police on a neighbourhood basis; wide discretion allowed to the police and the courts in the handling of cases which leads to little use of institutional sanctions and the dispersion of discretionary powers to several levels of the judicial system.

2. Delinquency: its roots, careers and prospects. D J West (Heinemann, 1982)

What has become known as the Cambridge Study of Delinquency took 20 years (from 1961 to 1981) to complete. It took a group of 400 schoolboys and studied them from age 8 to 25, looking for reasons why some became delinquent whilst others did not, and what happened subsequently in adult life. In its detailed assessment of the boys' backgrounds the study comes up with five key factors that are likely to make for delinquency: a low-income family, a large family, parents deemed by social workers to be

bad at raising children, parents who themselves have a criminal record, and a low intelligence in the child. Not surprisingly, the factors tend to overlap. Of the 63 boys in the sample with at least three of these factors present at age 10, half became juvenile delinquents - compared with only a fifth of the sample as a whole.

This book, by the project director, provides an overview of the findings and discusses the implications for social policy. Professor West argues in favour of a reversion to a 'treatment' ideology and more scientific evaluation of programmes and policies. He also advocates greater use of diversion and of community-based methods of dealing with young offenders.

3. Juvenile Delinquency - Trends and Perspectives. Michael Rutter and Henri Giller (to be published by Penguin Books, 1983).

This review of juvenile delinquency research literature, commissioned jointly by Home Office and DHSS, analyses and evaluates a comprehensive range of research findings and identifies policy implications arising. Rutter finds offending to be commonplace in adolescence, and identifies recidivist offenders as a more significant group than young offenders generally. Recidivism is usually preceded by antisocial behaviour at the pre-school and primary school stages, and is associated with a number of background factors such as parental criminality, family discord, ineffective supervision and discipline, weak parent/child relationships and large family size. The increase in juvenile criminality since the war, as revealed by official statistics, is to some extent illusory, since on the one hand a reasonably consistent recidivist group seems to be committing more crimes, and on the other more trivial crime by non-recidivists is being drawn to public attention. Nevertheless there was some increase over the 1960s and early 1970s, alongside increases in other indicators of adolescent malaise such as anorexia nervosa, drug dependency and suicide attempts. Immigration, unemployment, working mothers and urbanisation are not associated with crime but the problems associated with low social status are. Boys are more delinquent than girls.

Some intervention is counter-effective because of the labelling effect. but by and large the type of court disposal has little impact on the likelihood of reoffending. The most promising policies for reducing levels of juvenile offending seem to be physical crime prevention designed

to reduce the opportunity for crime, ecological intervention to improve school ethos and area influences, and firm and unequivocal disapproval of delinquent behaviour by parents and teachers without recourse to formal intervention by the police or the courts. Residential placement is not likely to reduce recidivism unless combined with efforts to improve the home environment.

4. Young Children Grow Up. L J Schweinhard and D P Weikart. (The High/Scope Press, 1980).

There has not yet been any research in the UK to test the possible effects of pre-school education on subsequent delinquency and criminality. However, a recent report from the US by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation on the Ypsilanti Perry Pre-School Project, which has followed over a period of 18 years from pre-school age the lives of 123 disadvantaged children born between 1958 and 1962, concluded that pre-school education benefits the teenager in terms of both educational performance and social adjustment. Despite necessary reservations about the small size of the sample and the danger of applying findings from one country uncritically to another, this study could have implications for the UK.

5. 15,000 Hours: Secondary Schools and their effects on Children.

M Rutter, B Maughan, P Mortimore and J Ouston (Open Books, London 1979)

This study set out to see what effects schools have on their pupils. It was conducted at a time when conventional academic wisdom doubted whether schools had any long-term impact at all. It compared the progress of some 2,000 children in 12 secondary schools in Inner London.

The study found that schools differed markedly in their pupils' intellectual attainment and general behaviour, including delinquency. Factors within the control of staff, such as the extent of academic emphasis and the use of incentives and rewards, were found to be related to pupils' intellectual performance, behaviour and to a lesser extent to delinquency. In addition to these 'school ethos' factors, the intellectual mix of pupil intake was found to be important. Physical factors such as school size, and the broad administrative structure of schools did not appear to have any effect on children's behaviour.

6. Parents and Children in the Inner City. Harriett Wilson and G W Herbert. (Routledge, 1978).

This research was concerned with a group of very disadvantaged inner city families. Delinquency was taken as one criterion of disturbance amongst the children under study. A highly significant association was discovered between lack of parental supervision and delinquency, with the parents of non-delinquent children operating a strict regime that limited their children's activities. A later study by Harriett Wilson, published in the British Journal of Criminology, looked at a further set of families, broader in range in terms of social handicap and divided between the inner city and suburban estates. Again, the findings confirmed the close association between parenting methods and delinquency. While lax parenting was most common among families with severe difficulties, Wilson argues that this should be interpreted less in terms of unsatisfactory attitudes than as a reflection of the difficulties under which handicapped families have to operate.

7. Home Office Research Study No. 35. The Effectiveness of Sentencing. (HMSO, 1976).

This review of the literature on the effects of various kinds of sentences in reducing or discouraging criminal behaviour was produced to provide a detailed appraisal of English research at a time when most published accounts had been based on North American experience. The first part of the report discusses some of the aims of sentencing - punishment, incapacitation, deterrence and rehabilitation. Criminological opinion has in the past tended to favour the last of these, thus to some extent influencing innovations in penal methods and limiting their evaluation by requiring that only correctional changes are regarded as legitimate evidence of effectiveness. The second part describes the techniques by which empirical research has been carried out, and summarises the results of 65 separate research studies.

The review confirms the pessimistic assessment made by others of the scope for reforming criminals by means of sentencing policy. There is no hard evidence for the greater effectiveness of long rather than short sentences, prison rather than non-custodial disposals, or therapeutic rather than punitive regimes.

8. Young offenders in Care (DHSS Social Research Branch, 1981)

This study looked at reoffending by a sample of children committed to care because of offending during 1975. 84% of the sample were boys, and over 80% had committed theft or burglary. The children were younger and less delinquent than a comparable sample of children admitted to approved schools some years before. Just over a third of the children reoffended during the 2 year period studied. 90% of them were prosecuted and 5% cautioned; no action was taken in only 5% of the cases. Reoffending was lowest among those who were placed at home as a deliberate policy, and highest among those who were placed at home while awaiting a residential placement, though two thirds of the reoffenders were placed in residential care at the time of the subsequent offence. However, the most significant predictor of reoffending was the frequency and the seriousness of earlier offending, and this factor outweighed all others.

9. Home Office Research Study No. 64. Taking Offenders out of Circulation (HMSO, 1980).

The first of two studies published here examines the 'incapacitation effect' of imprisonment - the amount of crime that is prevented by imprisoning offenders - by analysing the rates at which known offenders are convicted of crimes. It was found that if prisoners were given shorter sentences, or served a smaller proportion of them, the number of additional offences they could be expected to commit whilst at liberty would not lead to a dramatic increase in the overall level of crime. This is largely because many prisoners commit offences infrequently and most crime is committed by offenders given sentences other than imprisonment. At the same time, it is pointed out that quite modest reductions in the length of prison sentences imposed will significantly decrease the size of the prison population.

The second study considers the so-called 'dangerous offender' in prison. Although about 10% of the prison population can be described as capable of causing serious harm (based on their previous records), only a small proportion of them constitute such a high risk that they are detained indefinitely in the interests of public safety. The majority of the remainder, serving fixed sentences, do not subsequently commit further dangerous offences. Furthermore, the study finds that many dangerous crimes are in fact committed by those previously regarded as harmless. From this it is concluded that dangerous crime, being a relatively

uncommon phenomenon, can only rarely be forecast accurately and that increased use of very long or indefinite sentences for offenders initially considered dangerous would be unjustified. In any case, the small proportion who do constitute the greatest threat already serve long prison sentences.

Both studies reach the conclusion that although in theory prolonged incarceration could possibly prevent a good deal of crime, in practice substantial gain could only be achieved at an impossibly high cost. Nor did the research provide any reason to fear that a significant reduction of the prison population would have a seriously detrimental effect on crime prevention.

10. Home Office Research Study No. 67. Crime Control and the Police: A Review of Research. (HMSO, 1981)

The purpose of this review was to present, in readily accessible form, some of the more important pieces of research relating to police effectiveness. The opening chapters contrast the nature of routine police activities with commonly held assumptions of modern police work; the main part of the report consists of an appraisal of the research which has examined the effectiveness of traditional police strategies; it examines the obstacles to effective policing and finally considers the development of community policing. The review of the literature leads to two broad conclusions: first, that traditional police work such as patrolling or criminal investigation are probably less effective in controlling crime than generally supposed; secondly, that the introduction of carefully designed strategies specifically tailored to tackle selected problems might be worth exploring.

11. Home Office Research Study No. 47. Tackling Vandalism (HMSO, 1978)

This report describes the results of three studies looking at different aspects of vandalism.

The first examines the difficulties in attempting to measure the extent and distribution of vandalism. It finds that vandalism directed at people's private and personal property is comparatively rare; the highest rates of damage are suffered by schools and other local authority property as well as shops. Comparatively few incidents are reported to

the police whose records, consequently, considerably under-represent the scale of the problem.

In the second study some 600 boys from a large northern industrial city were questioned about their involvement in vandalism; few denied any involvement, about 4 out of 5 owned up to minor incidents but more serious vandalism was confined to a minority. Vandalism was seen by the authors to provide a way of gaining prestige within informal peer groups.

The third study examined the extent to which vandalism on housing estates is affected by building design and layout. Vandalism was found to be concentrated in the unsupervised communal areas of estates and was higher where entrances served as public thoroughfares. Estates where there were relatively high concentrations of children also suffered more vandalism.

The report concludes that remedies for vandalism need to be tailored to local circumstances; that a more systematic approach to the formulation of preventive strategies is required; and that design and management approaches deserve more consideration than broad-based 'social welfare' strategies.

12. Home Office Research Study No. 49. Crime in Public View (HMSO, 1979)

This report examines whether crime would be reduced if more people could be encouraged to intervene when they saw an offence being committed. The authors argue that the likelihood of people intervening is very small because most crimes are committed quickly and stealthily and the general public are surprisingly unobservant. The report examines a variety of measures aimed at improving the surveillance opportunities of employees and people in their homes, since these two groups seemed likely to notice suspicious behaviour and interpret it correctly. It is concluded that employees are more likely to provide effective surveillance.

13. Home Office Research Study No. 63. Crime Prevention Publicity: An Assessment. (HMSO, 1980)

Two crime prevention publicity initiatives are discussed. The first took the form of an anti-vandalism campaign operating through the medium of TV commercials: it was designed to warn the young of the risks involved

in the commission of vandalism and to encourage parents to exercise greater supervision over their children outside of the home. The levels of vandalism showed no change attributable to the publicity campaign. The other publicity campaign aimed to increase levels of car security using a TV campaign in one area and posters in another. Neither the degree to which people lock their cars nor thefts from cars in either area showed any improvement over the campaign period.

14. Community Planning Project: Cunningham Road Improvement Scheme.
Final Report. A Hedges, A Blaber and B Mostyn. (NACRO, 1980).

This project, commissioned by NACRO, began in 1976 on a heavily vandalised and unpopular local authority housing estate. Its aim was to reduce vandalism and other sorts of crime principally through making physical improvements to the estates (e.g. pavement and fencing repairs, removal of graffiti, tree planting, etc.). Other elements of the project included putting a beat policeman on the estate, opening a Youth and Community Centre, and improving tenant-management relations. A policy of tenant consultation was followed in pursuing the various initiatives. The scheme was successful in improving the appearance of the estate, tenant satisfaction and feelings of security, and attitudes towards management. It is not clear, however, whether it succeeded in reducing crime.

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Ferdie Mount
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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

6 December 1982

I attach a note prepared by the Home Office summarising research on the reduction of crime which the Prime Minister has asked should be circulated to members of the Family Policy Group as background to their discussions.

I am sending copies to the Private Secretaries to members of the Group and those who have asked to be kept informed of its activities.

TIM FLESHER

Miss Jill Rutter,
H.M. Treasury.



SV
HOME OFFICE
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1st December, 1982

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David Gordon

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

Thank you for your letter of 29th November.

We were grateful for your offer of a covering paper and for the draft which you enclosed with the letter, but as I mentioned on the telephone the Home Secretary's preference is to have the letter circulated with no more than a very short covering note on the lines of Colin Walter's letter to Tim Flesher - and indeed of Tim Flesher's letter of yesterday to John Halliday enclosing the Chancellor's of the Exchequer's background paper. Tim Flesher subsequently told me that he was not proposing to circulate the Home Office paper before yesterday's meeting of the Group, but that he would circulate it towards the end of this week or early next.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Tim Flesher.

Yours ever

David

(D. E. R. FAULKNER)

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file

To: MR FLESHER
From: G J WASSERMAN

29 November 1982
c Mr Mount

Family Policy Group: Home Office Paper

The Home Office has taken a firm line against the proposal contained in the letter which I wrote to David Faulkner earlier today about how to handle the paper by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit summarising the findings of research about crime, its causes and its reduction.

It appears that Home Office officials - I shouldn't imagine that there was time to consult the Home Secretary - are not anxious for the conclusions of this survey to be spelt out too clearly at this stage. To do so, they say, would stimulate too much interest in this matter and would probably lead to a demand for a meeting to discuss it. They are not ready with positive proposals to put to the meeting and they would therefore prefer the paper to be sent out as a dull piece of background material in the hope that colleagues would not notice the wide ranging implications of its findings.

I think that this is a pity. But if the Home Secretary insists, I doubt that there is much we can do about it. I propose, however, that the Prime Minister should write to the Home Secretary along the lines of the draft memorandum attached to my letter to David Faulkner expressing concern at the disappointing conclusions of the survey, ~~and~~ asking the Home Secretary what he intends to do about its more positive proposals and suggesting that the matter be discussed at a FPG meeting in the New Year.

If you agree, I should be happy to let you have a draft.

In the meantime, Mr Faulkner suggested that you should circulate the note as you received it from Colin Walters under cover of a compliments slip from you. The note should of course be numbered FPG(82) 4.

GW



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CABINET OFFICE
Central Policy Review Staff

70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 7217

D E R Faulkner, Esq.,
Home Office,
50 Queen Anne's Gate,
London, SW1

29 November 1982

Dear David,

Family Policy Group

We spoke about how best to handle the note prepared by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit on Reducing Crime: The Findings of Research.

2. As I told you, both Tim Flesher and I would be sorry to see the paper circulated in its present form; i.e. simply as a note produced for another purpose and without a summary drawing out at least some of its implications for the work of the Family Policy Group. I have therefore tried my hand at producing a brief covering memorandum by the Home Secretary which (I hope) draws out the main (negative and positive) conclusions of the HORPU note and suggests something for the members of the Group to discuss.

3. If you agree, I propose that the Prime Minister's approval should be sought to the ^{HORPU}note being circulated as soon as practicable under cover of this Memorandum by the Home Secretary and under cover ^{a/s}of a letter from Tim Flesher indicating that while it is being circulated for information at this stage, the Prime Minister would be happy for it to be discussed by the Group if members expressed an interest in doing so.

4. Perhaps we could discuss later in the day. I am sending a copy of this letter and enclosures to Tim Flesher.

Yours ever,
GJW

(G J WASSERMAN)

DRAFT LETTER FROM:

PS No. 10 TO PS/CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

I enclose a copy of a paper by the Home Secretary covering a note by the Home Office Research and Planning Unit and other Departments summarising the latest research findings about crime, its causes and its reduction. This document is being circulated for information at this stage because, as the Home Secretary points out, its findings are relevant to many of the issues with which the Family Policy Group is likely to be concerned. If, however, members of the Group wish to discuss the note and its implications for policy and action, the Prime Minister would be happy to put it on the agenda for a later meeting of the Group.

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

REDUCING CRIME: FINDINGS OF RESEARCH

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Home Department

1. Earlier in the year I established an Interdepartmental Group of Officials to consider how Departments outside the criminal justice field could help to reduce crime. (Appendix I to FPG(82) 2 refers). As background to its deliberations, this Group asked the Home Office Research and Planning Unit, in consultation with other Departments, to undertake a review of the most up-to-date research findings about crime, its causes and its reduction. The conclusions of this review have recently been reported to me and because I think that they are relevant to the issues which we are about to consider in the Family Policy Group, I have decided to circulate them to the Group for information. [as soon as possible.] (Attached).

2. The main conclusions of this review - that the scope for reducing crime through changes to the criminal justice system itself (including sentencing policy, prison regimes, and police deployment and technology) is very limited and that the impact on crime of social policies (affecting e.g., the family, education or employment) is hard to predict and changes are difficult or slow to achieve - may strike colleagues as negative and disappointing. But we should not lose sight of the fact that the risks of falling victim to serious crime are still low in England and Wales, that only 5 per cent of crimes reported to the police involve confrontations and that the victims of such crime are much more likely to be young males than the infirm or the elderly. (The remaining 95 per cent of crimes are against property; the vast majority involving small sums.)

3. As far as tackling crime is concerned, the research confirms that the best predictor of adult criminal involvement is a history of juvenile crime and that juvenile criminality is itself related to many matters which I hope we shall be considering in the Family Policy Group; viz., family discord, the lack of consistent discipline and supervision at home and at school and the absence of pre-school facilities.

4. In addition, recent research by the Home Office appears to indicate that some of the most common and publicly disturbing sorts of crime - burglary, vandalism, etc. - can be effectively reduced through the management, design or manipulation of the immediate environment in which they occur; e.g., improved lighting, vandal-resistant design and materials, closed circuit TV surveillance, the employment of care-takers, doormen or additional shop assistants, improved supervision of children's play on housing estates, reducing the number of large cash transactions, etc. If further work confirms the cost-effectiveness of this "situational" approach to crime prevention, we shall have to consider what the Government can and should do to persuade the people or organisations concerned (e.g. local authorities, housing associations, firms) to take the necessary action.

W W

Home Office

29 November 1982.

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

sc JV
cc G. Hanerman
CPR



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

24 November 1982

Dear Sir

FAMILY POLICY GROUP

Your letter of 11 November enclosed copies of the papers by Mr Mount and by the CPRS which are to be discussed at the meeting of the Family Policy Group on 30 November (FPG(82) 1 and 2).

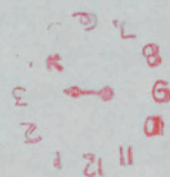
Appendix I to FPG(82) 2 refers to the Interdepartmental Group of Officials which the Home Secretary established earlier in the year to consider how Departments outside the criminal justice field could help to reduce crime. A paper had already been commissioned by the Official Group summarising the findings of relevant research. This paper is now available and I enclose a copy. The Home Secretary thought that members of the Family Policy Group might be interested to have copies for information at this stage.

I wonder if you could arrange for the paper to be circulated to members of the Family Policy Group, if the Prime Minister agrees?

Yours ever
CJW

C J WALTERS

T Flesher, Esq.



24 NOV 1982