

# LEGGACY

The Croydon Children's Fund

## Reflections On Youth Crime

November 2007

## Projects/Services which have received funding from The Croydon Children's Fund

THEME	PROJECTS	
	STATUTORY	VOLUNTARY
YOUTH CRIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Inclusion Support Panel (YISP), Youth Offending Team (YOT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Junior Youth Inclusion Project (JYIP), Croydon Youth Development Trust (CYDT)</li> <li>Croydon Young People's Project (CYPP), SOVA</li> <li>RUOK, Victim Support</li> </ul>
OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES/ PLAY/ PREVENTATIVE WORK		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Valley Park TOC H – Peppermint Centre</li> <li>Together in Waddon</li> <li>Croydon Community Bus</li> </ul>
WITH BME CHILDREN		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beat the Street, Croydon Youth Development Trust (CYDT)</li> </ul>
PARTICIPATION		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Croydon Xpress, Croydon Voluntary Action (CVA)</li> </ul>
IN SCHOOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reaching Out, Borough of Croydon (Education)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place2be</li> <li>Voluntary Reading Help</li> </ul>
WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated Therapy, Primary Care Trust (PCT) (Group A)</li> <li>ADHD Development Worker, Borough of Croydon (Ed Phyc)</li> <li>Willow – Bereavement, Primary Care Trust (PCT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Garwood Foundation, Rutherford School</li> <li>Croydon Mencap, (Benefits programme)</li> </ul>
PARENTING		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parentline Plus (PLP)</li> <li>PATCH Project at Croydon People's Housing Association (CPHA)</li> </ul>

**Notes:**

- Many of the projects/services cross over these themes, but this gives some indication of their primary functions
- All of the projects/services above were funded from the outset in 2003/04 until 2007/08 unless otherwise indicated below
- Beat the Street, Parentline Plus and Voluntary Reading Help were funded from 2003/04 until 05/06
- Place2be was funded from 2003/04 until 06/07
- RUOK received a one off payment in 2004/05 and is being funded in 2007/08

## Key Messages From Children's Fund Projects And Evaluators:

- There needs to be consistent funding for early intervention/ prevention projects such as those funded by the Croydon Children's Fund.
- There need to be more organised youth activities for children under 13 (the Youth Service only works with 13+ & there is nothing for under 13s). Younger children need to have access to organised and safe activities. There could also be sessions, for example giving life skills and signposting to different services.
- Services are effective when localised around schools and different communities. This reduces problems with transportation and makes services more accessible.
- Services in schools should be supported to reduce exclusion.
- There needs to be ring-fenced funding for education that allows schools to address emotional and behavioural difficulties, having dedicated teams for pastoral services.
- Schools need to be open to accepting outside support services.
- This should run alongside mentoring and parenting support, where appropriate.
- Children, young people and their families need to be given a voice that feeds into decision-making affecting their lives.
- There need to be family activities that are fun and free so that there are places where parents can take their children to spend time together. There needs to be holiday provision as well as activities during term-time.
- Services addressing ADHD, different forms of disability and support for bereavement address important risk factors for young people to avoid criminal or anti-social behaviour. Funding needs to continue for these services.
- Specialised training should be given to mainstream staff to identify risks and needs and then seek appropriate support and make referrals to targeted services in a timely way.



*ADHD Development Worker:  
Activities in Preventative strategy*

## Star Examples From Children's Fund Projects

### ★ Youth Inclusion Support Project

The YISP (Youth Inclusion Support Panel) is a multi-agency planning panel that seeks to prevent offending and anti-social behaviour amongst children aged 8-13. (Croydon YISP has secured additional funding to work with 14-17 year olds.) The main emphasis of the YISP is ensuring that children and their families receive mainstream and voluntary services at an early stage, as appropriate to their needs in order to reduce the risk factors, and bolster protective factors, known to be associated with the onset of offending by children. A further objective is to ensure that these children are in full-time education.

Agencies represented on the panel are Social Services, Education, Croydon Children's Fund, Youth Offending Team (YOT), Police, Housing, Connexions, CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and Youth Services. All aforementioned agencies, as well as parents and voluntary agencies, can refer children to the YISP and a clear referral process is in place.

Young people and their families are exposed to different risk factors that can lead to anti-social behaviour and crime. The YISP workers make an initial assessment of the risks and the needs of the young person and the cases are taken to the YISP Panel that has representatives from the agencies listed above. An action plan is decided for each of the children's cases and a package of support is tailored for the young person. This might include 1:1 support, mentoring, group work and partnership work with other agencies. The caseworkers engage with the children for around 1.5 - 2 hours weekly,

generally at school if possible, but also in their home environment or local community, for a period of 3-6 months. The Individual Support Plans are reviewed regularly.

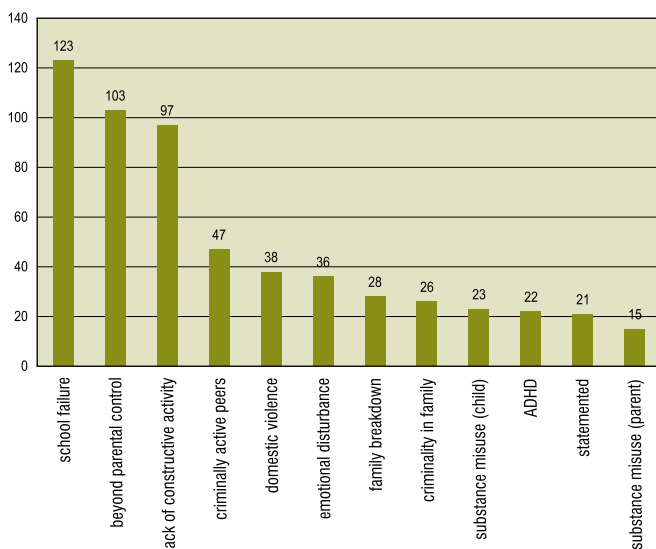
In the evaluation with service providers' comments about the YISP include:

- Promotes better interagency working around children
- Targets resources better around children and identifies gaps in services
- Provides some families with level of preventative work that helps them
- Helps to reduced number of school exclusions
- Good project – lots of kids and parents
- Improved co-ordination of services to children and young people with more holistic assessment of children.

Referrals to YISP, and levels of engagement, have steadily increased throughout the last three years, resulting in the Team adopting more of a risk-led approach in order to increase capacity. Children referred have presented complex needs and increasingly challenging behaviours, including particularly high levels of aggression.

A total of 225 children/families were engaged with YISP throughout '06-'07. The following table shows the primary risk factors that young people identified.

## Risk factors Identified by Referrals



Taken from the YISP annual report 2006/2007

Looking at these risk factors can also help to identify how many of the other Children's Fund funded projects play a part in a preventative strategy to address youth crime.



Youth Inclusion Support Panel: Parents involved in evaluating YISP

## ★ ADHD Development Worker

Research on ADHD show the following:

- 25% of people in prison have ADHD (often unidentified)
- There is a strong link between untreated ADHD and substance abuse which has in turn a strong link with crime
- Children with ADHD are 8 times more likely to be excluded from school
- 51% of children in pupil referral units and specialist EBD provision at secondary level have symptoms of ADHD yet only 5% have a diagnosis
- Young people with ADHD don't think of the consequences of their actions and therefore have a high risk of repeated offences and impulsivity

Therefore supporting projects that address ADHD can lead to:

- Raised awareness of ADHD and thus identification and treatment that can help to reduce the chance of offending
- Early identification of ADHD and intervention reduces development of low self-esteem and behavioural complications
- If ADHD is treated with medication it can help to reduce substance abuse
- Even late identification and treatment of ADHD can lead to young people beginning to change and succeed
- If staff members in schools are trained and booklets and DVDs sent to school then they can recognise symptoms. Police, the Youth Offending Team and the YISP can also receive training
- Out of school positive experiences, such as the ADHD Football Club can be important for the self esteem of young people and for families

## ★ Junior Youth Inclusion Project

The aim of the project is to provide preventative support services for 40 children between the ages of 8-12 who are considered to be at risk of exclusion, offending, or are in danger of not reaching, or maximising their educational potential.

What difference the project has made to children  
This chart shows a summary of how children saw themselves before they joined the project and what has changed since. Here are some of their comments from girls and then from boys.

Girls	
<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
I was very angry when people cussed my mum and I used to beat them up. Before we could not go on trips because I used to misbehave	Now when people cuss my mum I say "yeah – whatever". I don't care. Now we go on trips. Good (JYIP 13 months)
Boring nothing to do, no money for trips, less friends to play with, staff boring, can't talk about problems without being shy.	Exciting, more friends to play with, more trips new kind staff can talk about problems without being shy. (JYIP 13 months)
Angry, I was always getting into fights. When I was angry with someone at home I would beat someone up at school for it.	Calm now I can control my temper a lot more and I can talk to someone about my problems. (JYIP 13 months)

Boys	
<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>
No help. Angry, because I had no-one to play out with, I was very bad I needed to fix my behaviour, I'm not free. I swear too much to teachers"	Now I have people to play out, I have lots of friends. (JYIP unsure how long)
I was excited about coming to JYIP	My temper has calmed down. (JYIP 3 months)
I couldn't control my temper	Kind of feel better as I can control my temper. (JYIP 1 year)
Angry I normally threw punches	Calm now. I give slaps now; I can control my temper a little bit more. (JYIP 13 months)
I was shy and crying when someone punched me, I was sad. It wasn't nice with Beat the Street	I play with everyone. It's nice with JYIP. (JYIP 4 days)
I was shy; I used to be quiet and didn't know anyone.	Talking to more people, I know everyone. (JYIP unsure how long)

These charts show that boys and girls attending JYIP are controlling their temper more and are calmer. The young people who were shy say they are happier, have more friends and talk more, both to workers and people in the group. Most of the young people spoken to by the evaluation team thought their behaviour had improved since coming to JYIP. One boy commented about his behaviour:

“School is good now. I don’t have any more fights. Peter (JYIP worker) told me fighting does not always solve problems. Now I tell the teacher if there is a problem. I don’t cuss teachers, I talk to them.”

JYIP gives young people the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour. A boy gave this comment:

“I calmed down and started to behave. Started to see what I was doing was wrong. I started to see myself. Kids and workers helped me with that.”

More girls than boys said that they felt shy. Some said they had been picked on and some said they lashed out, but all of them talked of having made friends, not being so shy and feeling happier.

There were positive comments from children about the workers and helpers including:

- They listen to us
- Consider our opinions
- Turn fights into play fights
- Help me with my behaviour.

★ TOC H, Valley Park,  
Together In Waddon,  
The Community Bus

These projects all work to build children’s confidence and self esteem in an out of school setting. All work with art, drama, dance and games to ensure that boys and girls are not bored and have a chance to express their feelings and talk about issues that are important to them. This increased confidence and constructive activity can help children with life skills and coping with difficulties they are having at school and at home.

## ★ Children And Young People's Project

The project's core activity is mentoring, which involves selecting, recruiting and training volunteers to work with young people (aged 8-21) on a one-to-one basis whilst aiming to meet specific individual goals. However, the Children's Fund arm of the project specifically targets 8-13 year olds who are, or at risk of social exclusion, exclusion from education, who have offended or at risk of offending or a combination of these. The mentors act as a listening ear and actively engage with young people to provide advice and support on issues such as bullying, helping with homework and pursuing positive leisure activities.

### What children liked about the project and what they would change

Children said that they valued the project because:

- It had helped with their behaviour
- It had helped with their confidence
- It had helped them to control their anger
- They enjoyed going on activities and outings with their mentor
- It gave them the opportunity to talk to someone

All children said that they wouldn't change anything about the project.

What difference the project has made to children  
This chart shows a summary of how children saw themselves before they started joining the project and what has changed since. Here are some of their comments.


Before	After
Terrible behaviour, always trouble at school, used to get into fights, sometimes skipped school	Not so many fights – got into football team and I did a whole term this year. I'm getting on better with my teachers (Boy, 14+)
I was terrible – used to get into fights with my sister	Getting on a lot better – we talk instead of fighting. We still fight sometimes, but not so much (Boy, 14+)
Had arguments with my mum	I can talk better with my mum now (Boy, 14+)
Never used to do school work and bunked my lessons, used to swear at people	Don't swear at the teacher, don't bunk my lessons and do my homework. (Girl, 14+)
Never used to come home and never liked my mum	Come home now and don't swear at my mum (Girl, 14+)
Hit people, angry, trouble with teacher, fights	Sometimes I still hit people, but less angry, less fights (Boy, 11-13)



## ★ Place2be, Willow, Parentline Plus

Supporting a counselling approach within schools and providing places for parents to seek advice is also important in addressing the risk factors associated with youth crime. Projects that seek to work with schools need to be welcomed and supported financially as part of a preventative and early intervention strategy.

One example is where in the work that YISP was undertaking with a young person, bereavement of a significant family member was identified as being a major contributory factor to the risk of the young person being involved in anti-social behaviour. Due to the networking that has been undertaken by services funded through the children's fund a rapid referral to Willow was possible.

HAVING MY SAY!	
	
Please fill out at start of the session:	
How much do you know about personal safety?	Nothing <sub>1</sub> A little <sub>2</sub> <u>Quite a bit</u> <sub>3</sub> A Lot <sub>4</sub>
Please fill out after the session:	
How much do you now know about personal safety?	Nothing <sub>1</sub> A little <sub>2</sub> Quite a bit <sub>3</sub> <u>A Lot</u> <sub>4</sub>
Comments - What did you think about this session? Continue on the back if you have lots to say!	I think that it is a good thing to tell us about safety because now that we will be going Secondary we will be handling larger and maybe by ourselves

RUOK: Victims of Crime evaluate project

## ★ RUOK

R U OK works with children aged 8 –14 who have been the victims of crime. The project is responsive to individual children's needs and provides support and information around various issues other than being a victim of crime e.g. bullying, schoolwork pressure and family difficulties. These are crucial issues that can seriously affect a child's quality of life – having an impartial outside confidant to discuss them with is a fundamental area of need.

The workers develop follow-up strategies in conjunction with the children e.g. 'diary of events' sheets to record incidents of bullying, referrals to in-school personnel and outside agencies, conflict resolution and mediation meetings when requested by the children. These strategies give back some of the power and confidence to the young person and help them to believe that they can do something themselves to improve the situation.

The project runs informal drop-in group sessions where children can eat their lunch and have a relaxed and safe space to converse and bond together are a very good complement to the more intensive and confidential one-to-one work. They are particularly important for showing boys and girls that their problems and concerns are shared by the peer-group - they are not alone - and that talking about them publicly is OK.

Without projects like RUOK the anger of the victims of crime is not dealt with, they may be too afraid to press charges and therefore the offender is not in the criminal justice system and the victim may be too afraid to attend school.

## Acknowledgements:

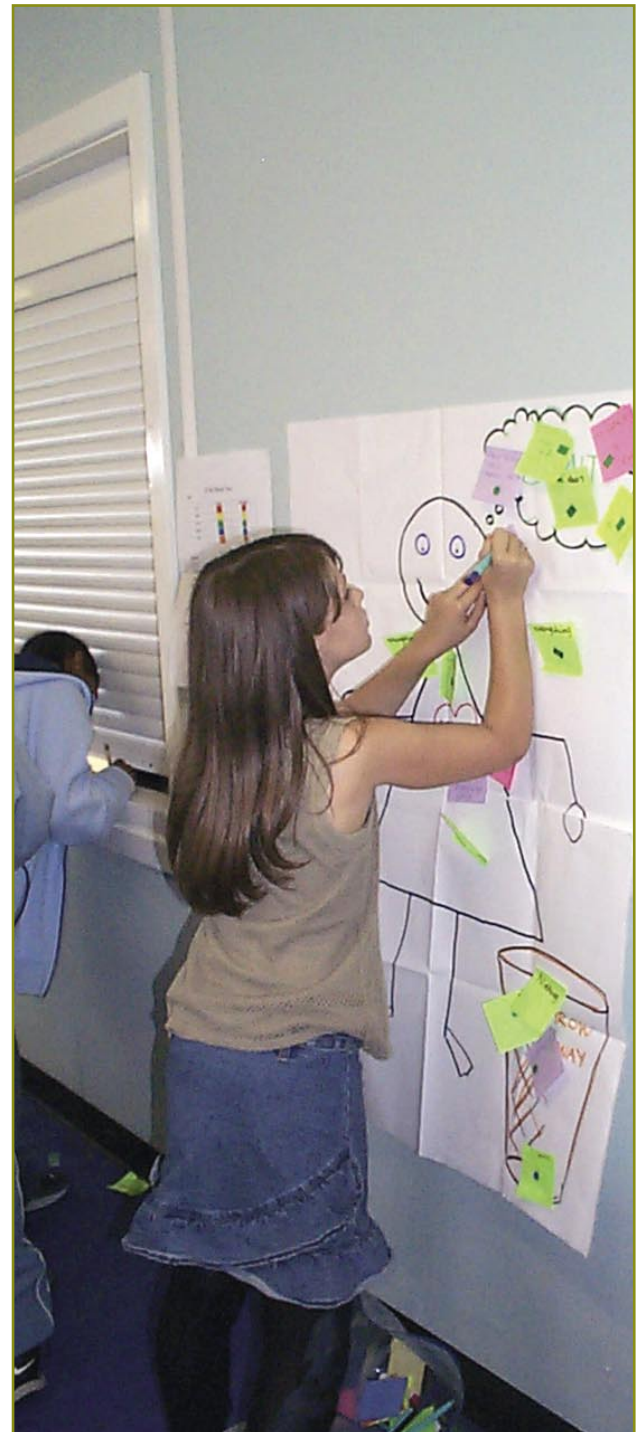
This document was written by Vicky Johnson with Robert Nurick, the local evaluators for the Croydon Children's Fund and was based on information from the full evaluation of the Croydon Children's Fund, available from Croydon Voluntary Action, and a workshop run with the following projects: ADHD Development Worker, Children And Young People's Project, Croydon Xpress, Parentline Plus, TOC H, Valley Park, Place2be, Reaching Out, RUOK, Willow, Youth Inclusion Support Panel In addition, information was included from: Junior Youth Inclusion Project, Together In Waddon

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Croydon Young People's Project: Evaluating Drama project





children's fund

## What is the Children's Fund?

The Croydon Children's Fund programme was introduced in 2003. The fund was primarily set up to develop services for children at risk of social exclusion in all local areas, aiming to provide better increased co-ordinated preventive services. Funding is targeted at children and young people aged 5-13 years old and also their families.

The fund is part of the Government's strategy to tackle disadvantage and inequality arising from child poverty and social exclusion, through addressing national priorities including improving school attendance and attainment, improving health (including mental health) and reducing crime and anti social behaviour.

A key element of the programme is that services are locally determined according to local need and planned in consultation with children and families from the outset. In Croydon a comprehensive mapping and consultation exercise was undertaken to find out the views of children, young people and their families and this was used in the development of the initial three-year strategy for the Croydon Children's Fund.

This report was commissioned by the Croydon Children's Fund,  
and written by Vicky Johnson with Robert Nurick from Development Focus Trust