Intensive Supervision and Monitoring Schemes for Persistent Offenders
The Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate has published a development and practice report about intensive supervision and monitoring (ISM) schemes (formerly known as persistent/prolific offender projects). These schemes aim to provide intensive supervision and surveillance of persistent adult offenders combining support for rehabilitation with swift response in the event of non-compliance. The schemes, which target the most persistent offenders in a local area, are run by the police and probation services working in partnership. Other agencies, for example, housing, education, alcohol and drug projects and employment, also contribute.

This report summarises the findings of a study looking at the implementation and delivery of these schemes, using qualitative data from interviews with ISM staff and participants conducted between April and December 2003. The evidence from the study was generally positive, with interviewees concluding that the scheme was making a considerable impact on local communities and the lives of individual offenders.

The report makes recommendations about the flexibility that staff need when making appointments. Care should be taken to ensure that ISM participants do not become dependent on the scheme. Schemes should be resourced sufficiently to allow for regular home visits. Women participants, in a minority on ISM schemes, may have particular issues, for example requiring appointments that fit with childcare commitments or a need to work with a female member of staff. Mentoring arrangements may be appropriate for some black and Asian ISM participants.

Other recommendations include good communication between the ISM scheme and local courts, as well as with other partner agencies. There may be benefits in ISM team members attending police tasking meetings on a regular basis to foster positive links between the scheme and the local police.

For further information, see http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/dpr41.pdf
Restorative Justice: Helping to Meet Local Needs

This is the title of a guidance document issued in March 2005 by the National Criminal Justice Board to members of local criminal justice boards. The guidance encourages local boards to develop restorative justice for adults in their local areas. The guide outlines the benefits of restorative justice in improving victim satisfaction with the criminal justice system, raising public confidence and reducing the fear of crime.

It identifies a number of points as key if restorative approaches are to be successfully introduced, including:

- starting with a particular area or group of victims or offenders and building from there
- strong leadership from the top as restorative justice requires new thinking and a change of culture
- building on existing expertise in youth justice or the voluntary sector
- multi-agency work with contributions from criminal justice agencies and the voluntary sector
- adequate training for staff involved in direct victim-offender contact
- creating a group of specialist staff who act as a springboard for developing this work throughout the organisation
- raising awareness about restorative approaches and victim awareness amongst all staff
- setting performance measures which support good quality restorative justice approaches.

The report also includes resources intended for managers charged with implementing restorative justice approaches. These include frameworks for strategic planning and performance management.

For further information, see http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs4/rj_implementation_guidance.pdf

Young People and Anti-social Behaviour

Recently published guidance focuses on the role that Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) can play in preventing and reducing anti-social behaviour perpetrated by young people. The report, published jointly by the Youth Justice Board, Home Office Anti-social Behaviour Unit and the Association of Chief Police Officers, is intended for staff in YOTs and also for other agencies, for example housing providers and local authorities, working to tackle anti-social behaviour.

The guidance argues that YOTs play a crucial role in this endeavour by providing advice on interventions that can be used to address the risk factors behind a young person’s behaviour, contributing to decision made about individual young people and implementing interventions with young people involved in antisocial behaviour.
The report gives examples of good practice, for example the range of measures put in place to tackle under-age drinking and criminal damage outside a medical centre in Oxfordshire. A multi-agency approach and local media coverage led to a reduction in vandalism, improved fencing at the medical centre and the provision of a mobile youth centre.

The guidance also highlights the role of the individual support order (ISO). If a magistrates' court imposes an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) on a young person aged between 10 and 17, it is also required to make an ISO if it takes the view that it would help prevent further anti-social behaviour. YOTs will advise the court on the need for the ISO and outline what it might contain.

Speaking at the launch of the guidance Rod Morgan, Chair of the Youth Justice Board said:

Youth offending teams nationwide have a very successful track record in working with difficult and disruptive young people. It is vital that YOTs work with other agencies such as local authorities, police, social landlords, so that they can be involved in making decisions on tackling anti-social behaviour, and can draw up plans to work positively with a young person. Ultimately we want to make a lasting difference to the young people with whom we work and the communities in which they live.

The full guidance can be downloaded from the Youth Justice Board website at http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/Publications/Scripts/ prodView.asp?idproduct=212&cP=YJB

A Review of What Works
The second edition of the research study ‘The impact of corrections on re-offending: a review of what works’ was published by the Home Office in February 2005. This lengthy study begins by assessing the evidence for the effectiveness of interventions with offenders. It considers the evidence for the effectiveness of offending behaviour programmes run in prison and probation in the UK and concludes that the quasi-experimental and non-experimental evaluation studies most common in the UK make it difficult to attribute outcomes to the effects of the intervention. However, the report does confirm that international evidence tends to support the use of cognitive-behavioural offending behaviour programmes and interventions with offenders. Findings also show that offenders who complete programmes typically do better than non-starters, non-completers and comparison groups, and that those who start and fail to complete do much worse than the other groups.

The report identifies and discusses factors associated with the onset of offending behaviour, the persistence of offending over time and with desistance from crime. It also argues that attention should not focus exclusively on the cognitive deficits of offenders but also on work to ensure that prisoners and those supervised in the community are able to
integrate into the community by, for example, improving their basic skills and securing stable accommodation.

The report concludes that, whilst providing useful pointers about the effectiveness of interventions, the current knowledge about 'what works' falls some way short of providing definite answers and solutions. Poor implementation and sub-optimal research design are identified as two key factors that limit the development of knowledge about the effectiveness of interventions and the report identifies possible improvements.

In his foreword to the study, Martin Narey, Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service, writes:

(\textit{This study}) is positive in confirming that there is a sound theoretical basis for our programmes, and that for some programmes there is now good evidence that they do indeed reduce re-offending. But the report also sets us some major developmental challenges - for more powerful research methods that will give us a clearer picture, more sophisticated measures of impact, more complex interventions that tackle the mix of criminogenic factors present in each individual and the creation of offender management as an effective tool for targeting the right interventions in each case. These are challenges which NOMS was established to meet and we are determined to do so.


\textbf{Reducing Child Imprisonment}

‘A better alternative: reducing child imprisonment’ is the third and final report in a series from Nacro’s committee on children and crime. It considers how the numbers of children held in custody might be significantly reduced and argues for a universal commitment across the youth justice sector to pre-court diversion and keeping children out of prison.

The report argues that the following areas of policy need attention:

- There should be no financial incentives that favour custody. For example, the costs of custody are met centrally and not by the local authorities that fund alternatives to custody.
- Youth justice practitioners must be convinced of the need to avoid custody. Custody should not be seen as welcome respite when managing difficult cases.
- Intensive supervision and surveillance programmes should be reserved as an alternative to custody and not used in place of other, less intensive, community options.
- The range of low-level community options needs to be expanded and greater use made of fines, discharges and reparation orders.
Lord Carlile, chair of the Nacro committee on children and crime, said

It is well recognised that there are too many children held in custody, and that many of the custodial placements in which they are held are unsuitable. This report shows how effective alternative interventions can break the cycle of damaged children becoming revolving door cases in the criminal justice system, and highlights what needs to be done to bring about a very necessary reduction in child imprisonment.

For further information, see www.nacro.org.uk

Crime in Scotland
The 2003 Scottish Crime Survey (SCS) is a household survey of people’s experiences and perceptions of crime based on interviews with more than five thousand adults throughout Scotland. The survey provides information about the extent of crime and victimisation in Scotland and compares its findings with official police recorded crime statistics. It also explores the risk of victimisation, public perception of crime and the prevalence of drug use in Scotland.

Key findings about victimisation include:

- Twenty-three per cent of respondents were victims of at least one personal or household crime in 2002. This represents a small increase from 20 per cent in 1999 but remains lower than the risk in 1992 (27%).
- One in six (18%) households experienced an incident of property crime in 2002. The most common property crime was vandalism, experienced by one in ten households.
- Just under 3 per cent of households were victims of housebreaking in 2002. This represents a continuation of the downward trend in the prevalence of housebreaking since 1992.
- Only 6 per cent of respondents were victims of a personal crime in 2002. The most common personal crimes were assault (3%) and personal theft (2%). Less than one per cent experienced robbery.
- In terms of the variation of risk among different sections of the population, the following observations can be made:
  - Men were slightly more likely than women to become victims of both household and personal crime in 2002. This is particularly evident amongst 16 to 24 year old men in relation to personal crime.
  - The high prevalence of personal crime against young men is primarily due to the high prevalence of violent crime amongst this group.
  - Those aged 60 or over were the least likely to become the victim of both household and personal crime.
  - Vehicle owners living in the most deprived areas were most likely to be victims of vehicle theft.
Domestic Violence and Young People

Women's Aid has launched a national domestic violence website for children and young people. The website has been designed to provide information about domestic violence, help young people identify whether it is happening in their home and point them to additional support and information. It also contains information for young people who are concerned about their friends. The website uses interactive checklists, quizzes and games to help children and young people to think through the issues that surround domestic violence. The website also contains safety measures to ensure that people can use it without putting themselves at risk.

See www.thehideout.org.uk

Work with Young Offenders Archive

The Community and Criminal Justice Division at De Montfort University (DMU) Leicester now houses the national archive on work with young offenders covering the years 1968-94. This was formerly held at the National Youth Agency (NYA) and was relocated to DMU when Alison Skinner the NYA Information Officer responsible for this subject area joined the university.

This is a unique collection containing:

- Department of health policy documents on the origins and development of intermediate treatment;
- Research and evaluation reports;
- Journal articles;
- NACRO documentation on the LAC83 (3) initiative directed at serious and persistent offenders in the 1980s;
- Reports of work with young offenders UK wide covering the period 1973-94;
- Books and practice manuals on work with young offenders

This is an essential resource for anyone conducting research on trends in policy and provision affecting young offenders over the last 40 years, as part of MA or PhD level study.

The collection can only be consulted on site. It can be accessed via Bibliographies on the I.T. literature entitled:

- A Bibliography of Intermediate Treatment 1968-84
- A Bibliography of Intermediate Treatment 1985-94

The report, which is written by Susan McVie, Siobahn Campbell and Korin Lebov, is available on-line at http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/justice/sccs.pdf