Offenders of the Future? Assessing the Risk of Children and Young People Becoming Involved in Criminal or Antisocial Behaviour

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Acknowledgements

The Home Office in connection with the On Track programme commissioned this reference manual. Responsibility for it was subsequently transferred to the Children and Young People’s Unit (CYPU) at the DfES. It aims to help people planning and delivering initiatives aiming to prevent the onset of criminal and antisocial behaviour to identify those young people who are most at risk of becoming involved in these behaviours and to target initiatives efficiently and effectively.

Development of the manual was assisted greatly by the sustained involvement and encouragement of representatives of the Home Office and CYPU. Our thanks go especially to Sara Trikha and Vicki Harrington (Home Office) and Chris Cuthbert (Children, Young People and Families Directorate at the DfES) for their unwavering commitment and support. We owe thanks to all those people who have given us their time and energy to assist in the development of this guide to assessing risk of offending, most notably the On Track workers who participated in telephone interviews and told us about the assessment procedures that they were using.

While we were thinking about the content of the manual, and determining the most helpful assessment tools, we were fortunate to have the opportunity to meet with Dr Dan Offord of the Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk, McMaster University, Montreal and Dr Mike Boyes from the Department of Psychology at the University of Calgary. They provided us with valuable information about similar projects in Canada and influenced the way we have presented our work. We are very grateful to them. Sadly, Dr Offord died suddenly in April 2000 but his wisdom relating to the assessment of children at risk lives on.

Thanks go also to all those practitioners and officials who filled in a consultation questionnaire, or offered us their comments on draft versions of this manual. Their comments have enabled us to refine the manual in order to make it relevant and accessible to a variety of people involved in supporting families and children.
Executive Summary

1. Introduction

The objective of this manual is to assist practitioners in identifying families with children aged between four and twelve who are at risk of becoming involved in criminal or antisocial behaviour and to facilitate effective targeting of interventions that aim to reduce such risk. It is aimed at both planners who decide in which neighbourhoods interventions will be located and at practitioners who deliver the interventions. The former need to develop clear priorities and effective targeting of resources and the latter need to identify and assess children at risk of offending and respond appropriately to their needs.

The manual reviews evidence about risk and resilience, describes the processes involved in making assessments, and suggests instruments which may assist in detecting whether a range of risk factors are present in the four key domains of a child’s life: the neighbourhood, the school, the family, and within the individual child. The emphasis throughout is on risk, with particular focus on risk to the community. References are made to websites where further information can be found. The Annexes contain descriptions of different kinds of assessment instrument.

2. Setting the Context

High levels of crime, particularly of juvenile offending, have been a matter of concern for many years. Finding ways of preventing children and young people from becoming involved in crime or antisocial behaviour has become a policy priority. The Government introduced a new Crime Reduction Programme for England and Wales in 1998, establishing a Youth Justice Board for England and Wales and Youth Offending Teams. With a clear focus on the prevention of offending and re-offending the programme aims to

1. Work with families, children and schools.
2. Tackle crime in local communities.
3. Develop products and systems which are resistant to crime.
4. Implement more effective sentencing practices.
5. Work with offenders.

This manual is designed to help planners and practitioners to respond to the first of these aims.

The Government has invested in a wide range of initiatives to reduce crime either directly (for example, On Track and Youth Inclusion Programmes) or indirectly (for example, the Children’s Fund, Sure Start and Connexions). These and other initiatives provide the necessary frameworks within which interventions are targeted at children most at risk of offending and antisocial behaviour and their families.

designed both to protect children and to maximise their potential. There is a particular emphasis on early intervention and a commitment to improved information sharing between agencies and the development of a common assessment framework. A new Children’s Bill 2004 creates the legislative spine for developing more effective and accessible services focused around the needs of children, young people and their families.

It is essential that professionals across all the statutory and voluntary agencies have a clear understanding of risk, resilience, protection and need and of how these aspects of a child’s life can be assessed. This manual offers a comprehensive point of reference which can be used in conjunction with a common assessment framework.

### 3. Risk and Protection

An understanding of the ways in which risk and protective factors and resilience work is essential for conducting useful and reliable risk assessments.

**Risk**

The work on identifying risk factors is based on an understanding that offending is part of a larger syndrome of antisocial activity which begins in childhood and often persists into adulthood. Only a limited understanding exists, however, about the relationship between risk and protective factors and later offending and antisocial behaviour.

The existence of one or more risk factors in a child’s life is not a good predictor of outcomes and children vary in terms of how they respond to risk. Risk factors are context-dependent and vary over time and with different circumstances. Where multiple risk factors exist, there is increased likelihood of poor outcomes for children.

The best predictors of offending differ according to age group. For children aged between 6 and 11, committing an offence appears to be the best predictor of future delinquent behaviour; the strongest predictors for children aged 12 to 14 are a lack of social ties and association with antisocial peers.

Risk and protective factors are apt to fluctuate over time. Minor changes in either of them can have important ripple effects on other factors and thereby substantially change the likelihood of a young person becoming involved in offending or antisocial behaviour. It may therefore be helpful to think in terms ‘developmental pathways’ into and away from crime.

**Protection**

Protective factors can help children ameliorate risk. They consist of internal assets and external strengths. The more protective factors there are, the greater the likelihood that a child will be resilient to risk. There are four broad types of protective processes, those which:

1. Reduce the impact of, or exposure to risk.
2. Reduce chain reactions to negative experience.
3. Promote self esteem and achievement.

4. Provide positive relationships and new opportunities.

When risk factors in a child’s life are not amenable to change, interventions can work to provide compensatory experiences or to enhance protective factors in one or more of the relevant domains of a child’s life: the community, the school, the family, or within the individual child. Many of the protective factors identified by research relate to the consistency and quality of care and support during childhood.

**Resilience**

The majority of children with identifiable risk factors do not engage in crime or antisocial behaviour. Despite challenging circumstances, children can develop resilience depending on the complex interplay between risk and protective factors. There are three primary ways in which children can display resilience:

1. By achieving positive outcomes even though they are at high risk.
2. By adapting successfully to stressful situations.
3. By recovering quickly from a crisis.

Research studies have delineated the characteristics of resilient and non-resilient children. Children with a stronger sense of attachment to other people, a more positive outlook on life, more plans for the future and more control over their lives are more likely to demonstrate resilience.

**Need**

If a child is assessed as being ‘at risk’, this does not necessarily mean that the child is ‘in need’. Need exists where there is an identifiable, effective and available solution to a perceived problem. Risk assessment and needs assessment are different, although they often go hand-in-hand and can sometimes be confused. Once an assessment of risk has been made, the focus can turn to the identification of need in order to establish which children and families are in need of, and can benefit from, interventions that are available.

A number of models help an understanding of the relationship between risk, protection, resilience and need. The additive model views risk and protective factors as being on a continuum, the interaction model suggests that risk and protective factors interact in a dynamic way, and the pathways model suggests that the effect of specific risk and protective factors are context-specific and depend on timing.

**4. The Assessment Process**

Assessing whether a particular child is at risk generally involves the following five steps:

1. Defining the purpose and objectives of assessment.
2. Specifying appropriate questions.
3. Selecting appropriate methods, tools and resources.
4. Collecting data.

5. Analysing data and interpreting results.

Information needs to be collected about the child, the family, the school and the community in which the child lives, from a range of sources, such as personal files, official statistics, social surveys, in-depth interviews, observation, focus groups and through the use of specific assessment instruments. The purpose of assessment is to identify risk and protective factors in order to provide early, developmentally appropriate intervention. The range of factors that might affect the potential for young people to engage in criminal or antisocial behaviour is extremely broad, encompassing personal characteristics, family life, peer group, school or community contexts, as well as being influenced by the social, economic, political and cultural climate.

When evaluating risk, it is important to be clear about which criminal activities and which antisocial behaviours are being targeted, and the purpose of the assessment. A distinction can be made between risk assessments that are protection-oriented and those which are management-oriented, both of which are helpful. It is possible to move from broader assessment which identifies who is at risk to assessment that focuses on how risk affects the needs of individual children. This involves a multigating approach which progresses from community-based assessment through to assessment of an individual child. It is a thorough, but time-consuming process which requires trained personnel.

However thorough assessment is, it is not an exact science. A false negative assessment might identify children as not being at risk when they are, and a false positive assessment might suggest that children are at risk when they are not. It is also important to avoid labelling children. Risk assessment must be undertaken cautiously by competent practitioners who maintain integrity and respect for human rights.

Practitioners need to be aware of the potential negative consequences of assessment. For instance, there is a risk of young people become negatively labelled before doing anything wrong, which may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy in that they develop negative behaviours because of the way they are treated.

5. Using Assessment Instruments

Much assessment in childcare has relied on professional judgements but this can be problematic since there is no way of establishing the reliability or validity of the assessments made. It is increasingly acknowledged that validated assessment instruments can offer greater structure and reliability. Although there is no validated tool currently available in the UK for predicting offending behaviour the manual refers to a number of instruments, including the new ONSET tool developed for the Youth Justice Board, that might be incorporated into an assessment process.

Some assessment tools may consist of aids to counting risk factors. Some risk factors cannot be detected through observation techniques, consequently, some assessment instruments have been designed to measure the presence of risk and protective factors. Nevertheless, assessment tools have limited accuracy in predicting which children will become involved in offending or antisocial behaviour and so professional judgement is still an important ingredient. The relationship between risk and resilience is complex, however, and there is always the potential for error in deciding which children are at risk and which are not.
Before selecting assessment instruments it is important to consider their

- reliability
- validity
- standardisation
- usability
- interpretability
- scariness
- language
- generalisability to other populations
- age-appropriateness

6. Assessing Community-based Risk

Children are affected by the characteristics of the areas in which they live, their neighbourhood, their school, their parents’ workplaces, and the values and customs locally and nationally. Assessment of risk at the community level involves secondary analysis of publicly available data at the smallest possible geographical area. Community assessment may be conducted in order to target specific communities or to contribute to the assessment of an individual child.

Community risk factors include the following:

- lone-parent households
- unemployment
- poor housing
- crime and antisocial behaviour
- community norms tolerant of crime
- residential mobility
- vandalism
- economic deprivation
- social exclusion

Youth crime tends to be high in areas where these factors are prominent, although the factors should not themselves be regarded as causes or explanations of youth crime. Nevertheless, higher rates of youth crime occur in deprived neighbourhoods in which people have little sense of community attachment. Multiple disadvantages place some families at risk of social exclusion and children in these families may
become involved in crime and antisocial behaviour at a young age. A number of indicators are available for measuring deprivation and child poverty and the resourcefulness of families.

Communities can also provide protective factors that create resilience to risk. Community well-being is enhanced through

- social support networks
- community awareness and involvement in addressing problems
- the ability to adapt to changed circumstances

These features of community life are elements of what is described as ‘social capital’, and comprehensive packages are available for measuring social capital at various levels.

When opportunities exist within the community for positive participation, children are less likely to engage in problem behaviours. Facilities such as youth organisations, parks and community centres can play a protective role. Community controls and surveillance can also reduce opportunities for criminal behaviour.

7. Assessing School-based Risk

Children spend a significant amount of their lives in school. Education itself is an important determinant of future life choices. Early antisocial behaviour, educational failure and low commitment to school are risk factors which are predictive of adolescent delinquency. Boys who display aggressive behaviour when they start school are at a greater risk of becoming involved in crime and antisocial behaviour later on. There is a clear link between truancy and school exclusion and offending behaviour.

A number of instruments exist to measure children’s behaviour, and to assess their readiness to learn and their commitment to school. Children’s readiness to learn when they first start school is a crucial determinant of their future achievement and behaviour. This can now be assessed by schoolteachers who can then adjust school programmes in order to meet children’s needs.

Targeting schools may be more cost-effective than attempting to conduct in-depth assessment of individual children, and schools are ideal sites for gathering information about the children attending them. It is now considered important to monitor child behaviour early, and a checklist can be used to assess various aspects of behaviour including aggression towards pupils and teachers.

The attachment a child feels towards school can act as a protective factor and reduce the chances of a high-risk child becoming involved in criminal or antisocial activities. Young people are more likely to feel attached to school if they feel able to participate in school activities and if they are rewarded for the effort they put in to school work and to other school-related activities.

8. Assessing Family-based Risk

The influence of family is an important factor in child development. Family management problems, family conflict and inappropriate modelling behaviours such as parental involvement in criminal activities, drug abuse or heavy drinking may all
affect whether a child becomes involved in delinquent and antisocial behaviour. A wide range of instruments is available for measuring family risk factors such as

- family history of criminal and antisocial activities, including alcohol and drug use
- family management problems and parental supervision
- family conflict and parental relationships

Families are also an important source of protective factors, thus assessments of family structures and relationships are an essential element in child assessment. Parental supervision is an important factor in respect of children’s behaviour. Furthermore, young people who spend time doing things with their parents are protected to some extent from risk. Being encouraged and praised by parents is important to children, as is their feeling valued within their family. High levels of parental monitoring are associated with higher academic achievement and lower levels of depression and criminal or antisocial behaviour.

Children and parents or other family members are sources of valuable information. It is important to make the purpose of the assessment clear, be sensitive to family concerns, be aware of cultural issues and norms and to build rapport with those providing information. Assessment is frequently regarded as intrusive and, thus, sensitivity and patience are key requirements of those conducting the assessment.


The community in which children live, the schools they attend and the families in which they are raised all have important influences on children’s behaviour. One way of identifying which children are at risk is through the use of social surveys which include questions about the neighbourhood, the school and the child’s family. The end objective of a multiple-gating approach to assessment is the assessment of individual children. Individual factors are crucial in determining which children might participate in offending or antisocial behaviours. Assessing a child may involve observation, interviews and the completion of assessment instruments. Parental permission, and consent from the child, should be sought before involving a child in an assessment process.

A number of individual risk factors can be assessed. These include

- alienation/rebelliousness
- association with peers who offend/are engaged in antisocial behaviour
- condoning attitudes toward crime and antisocial behaviour
- biological and physiological traits (e.g. attention deficit disorder)

Protective factors can also be assessed at the individual level. These include

- social skills
- coping behaviours
10. Intervening to Reduce Risk

There are three main types of targeting for crime-reduction strategies:

1. Primary – focusing on the general population of potential offenders.
2. Secondary – focusing on people at particular risk of offending.
3. Tertiary – focusing on those already involved in criminal activities.

Primary targeting involves universal programmes, which can be expensive. Tertiary targeting involves interventions with a known group of offenders. This manual focuses at the level of secondary targeting. It is not possible to provide a tailor-made assessment instrument that will suit all circumstances, so the manual is intended to be a practical resource for those planning and delivering crime reduction programmes. By identifying the children most at risk of offending, and providing early, appropriate interventions, the strengths of the children can be enhanced and their levels of risk reduced.

Research indicates that the most encouraging results occur when a prevention programme has many elements, is intensive, and targets severely disadvantaged young children. Interventions at the different levels of the community, school, family and child can have the most positive outcomes. Nevertheless, it is important to consider which interventions are most appropriate in reducing specific risk factors and enhancing specific protective factors.

Involving families or children in both assessment and intervention planning processes should be a central aspect of any crime prevention strategy. Consideration needs to be given to ways of involving family members and encouraging co-operation with practitioners.

When interventions are being planned, it is helpful to have an up-to-date audit of the services available in a given area and reliable information as to the research evidence which indicates what works, with whom, under what circumstances.
1. Introduction

Objectives

The objective in producing this manual was to assist practitioners attempting to identify children aged between four and twelve who may be at risk of becoming involved in criminal or antisocial behaviour, and to facilitate effective targeting of interventions that aim to reduce such risk. It is aimed at both local service planners who decide in which neighbourhoods interventions will be located and at practitioners who deliver the interventions and aims to help those planning and providing interventions to:

- develop priorities for action
- make informed decisions about helping children and families
- target resources effectively
- implement interventions that reach those children and families who will benefit most
- reduce antisocial behaviour and offending

It is anticipated that the manual will help practitioners to:

- identify children at risk of offending
- determine their strengths, and those of the families and the communities in which they live
- respond to the needs of at-risk children
- implement and maintain best practice

The manual reviews evidence about how risk and resilience affect the prospects of young people becoming engaged in criminal or antisocial behaviour, describes the processes involved in carrying out assessment, and suggests instruments that may help in detecting whether particular risk factors are present within neighbourhoods, schools, families and children. It is intended that the manual will facilitate the development of appropriate procedures for assessing the chances of a young person becoming involved in crime or antisocial behaviour at some point in the future and ensure that these procedures will be used appropriately. Consequently, it draws attention to the various problems that may arise from risk assessment, particularly the potential for it leading to negative outcomes for some children.

Although need is regarded as an important element in decisions about appropriate interventions, it is not the prime focus of the assessment referred to here. In this sense, the assessment procedures described differ from the Department of Health’s Framework for Assessment of Children in Need and Their Families, which aims to help practitioners to decide whether a child is in need of help and, if so, how that child and their family may best be helped. The emphasis of the Department of Health is on immediate need, whereas this manual relates to risk in respect of behaviour.
that might be enacted in the future. It therefore relates to assessment which is essentially predictive and based on evidence of causal factors.

**Layout of the Manual**

*Section 2* of the manual sets out the political and legal context in which risk assessment is conducted.

*Section 3* reviews the concepts of risk, protection and resilience, and existing knowledge about their interrelationships.

*Section 4* provides general information about the assessment process and considers the risks and ethical concerns associated with it.

*Section 5* looks at the development and use of assessment instruments.

*Sections 6–9* focus on the assessment of risk at the levels of community, school, family and individual child.

*Section 10* considers the targeting of interventions and the provision of initiatives.

In the *Annexes*, different kinds of assessment instruments are outlined, and a range of information that may be of use to policymakers and practitioners is provided.

At various points in the text, we refer to websites where further information can be found. These references should be regarded as essential elements.

Particularly important points are located in boxes such as this.
2. Setting the Context

The National Context

High levels of crime, particularly of juvenile offending, have been a matter of concern for many years. Latterly, concerns have extended to antisocial behaviour which the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defines as ‘actions carried out by an individual/s in a manner which caused, or was likely to cause, alarm, distress or harassment to one or more people not in the same household’. It seems that participation in criminal and antisocial activities can set some particularly vulnerable children on a path of persistent offending that continues into adulthood, while the severity of the types of crimes committed often increases. The MORI youth survey estimated in 2003 that one quarter of the five and a half million 10-17 year olds in England and Wales had committed a criminal offence of some kind in the previous 12 months and that 43 per cent of boys and 33 per cent of girls committed their first offence before reaching the age of 11.1 Young people remain at a disproportionately high risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system. They are also more likely than older people to be victims of crime.2 The Audit Commission has suggested that many young offenders who end up in custody have a history of professionals failing to listen and assessments not being followed by action.3 They suggest that early intervention, if it is targeted and well-managed, can be very effective. Intervention should ideally take place before children reach their teenage years. Finding effective ways of doing this has become a policy priority.

The earlier a male offender receives his first conviction the more likely he is to reoffend.4 Research shows, however, that criminal careers tend to be short-lived – one study found that over half of male offenders and some 80 per cent of female offenders had a criminal career of less than a year in length, and that the majority of offenders had been convicted on only one occasion.5 Clearly, offending is not particularly unusual since approximately a third of men and 8 per cent of women who were born in 1953 had been convicted of at least one offence by the time they reached the age of 46. Nevertheless, a small proportion of people become persistent offenders, and they account for a large proportion of the crime that is committed. One Home Office research study revealed that some 3 per cent of young offenders committed over a quarter of all youth crime.6

More information about youth crime and antisocial behaviour can be found in the Crime Reduction Toolkits based at: http://www.crimereduction.co.uk/toolkits/index.htm

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5 ibid.
The Policy Context

In 1996, The Audit Commission published a review of the arrangements for young offenders which described the existing system for dealing with youth crime as inefficient and expensive, and found that the services available were failing both young offenders and their victims. As a result, a new Crime Reduction Programme for England and Wales was announced during 1998. Resources are targeted at strategies that are thought to be able to reverse the growth of crime cost-effectively. The five broad themes of the programme are as follows:

1. Working with families, children and schools to prevent young people becoming the offenders of the future.
2. Tackling crime in communities, particularly high-volume crime such as domestic burglary.
3. Developing products and systems which are more resistant to crime.
4. Implementing more effective sentencing practices.
5. Working with offenders to ensure that they do not reoffend.

This manual aims to help practitioners to respond to the first of these themes, that of preventing antisocial behaviour and offending by working with children and families. While the Government does not wish to be seen as unduly intrusive in the area of family life, it recognises that there are steps that can be taken to ensure that families are supported in order to give children the best possible start in life.

A Home Office action plan for developing a strategy for tackling violent crime and setting an agenda for preventing young people from becoming involved in serious crime described the Government as being committed to helping vulnerable children, young people and their families, supporting them in breaking the cycle of poverty and disadvantage by responding effectively to early signs of difficulties.

The Government has thus invested in a series of initiatives, some of which are aimed directly at reducing crime, others of which have broader intentions which might lead to an indirect impact on crime reduction. Crime reduction initiatives include the following:

- On Track: Children and Families at Risk
- Intervention Work in Schools
- Youth Inclusion Programme
- Crime Reduction in Secondary Schools
- Communities Against Drugs
- Youth Inclusion and Support Panels

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• Junior Youth Inclusion Programmes
• Safer School Partnerships

Other related initiatives include the following:

• Children’s Fund
• Sure Start
• Connexions
• Safer Communities
• Quality Protects
• Family Support Grant
• Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
• Excellence in Cities
• Extended Schools

Many of these initiatives, together with initiatives in the private and voluntary sectors, provide the necessary frameworks for preventing children becoming involved in antisocial behaviour and offending and for targeting interventions. While universal interventions can contribute to raising the quality of life for all children and families, they may not represent the best use of resources for tackling crime. Consequently, assessing those children deemed to be most at risk has become of paramount importance.

In September 2003 the Government published a Green Paper, entitled *Every Child Matters*, which proposed the strengthening of preventative services for children by focusing on four key themes.\(^{10}\)

1. Supporting families and carers.

2. Ensuring necessary intervention before children reach crisis point and protecting children from falling through the net.

3. Addressing underlying problems such as weak accountability and poor service integration.

4. Ensuring that people working with children are trained, valued and rewarded.

The primary focus in the Green Paper was on protecting children from harm, and was heavily influenced by the circumstances surrounding the death of Victoria Climbie, outlined in Lord Laming’s enquiry.\(^{11}\) The proposed policies were designed both to protect children at risk and to maximise their potential. The Green Paper set out a framework for the delivery of services that cover children and young people in England from birth to the age of 19. Among the many objectives was that of reducing the number of children engaged in offending or anti-social behaviour. A number of


strategies were proposed including the creation of Sure Start Children’s Centres in each of the 20 per cent most deprived neighbourhoods, a Young People’s Fund, a new range of community sentences, a wider range of residential placements for young offenders, and new ways of tackling homelessness. Key measures in the proposals for youth justice reform aim to ensure more effective powers to intervene positively to address the behaviour of children under ten who are breaking the law, to make the youth justice process easier to understand, and to increase flexibility in the selection of interventions individually tailored to the needs of each young person.

In March 2004, the results of the consultation were published alongside the introduction of a Children’s Bill. The consultation has endorsed the proposals laid out in the Green Paper and demonstrated strong consensus in support of profound change in the cultures and practices of working with children, with a sharper focus on prevention and early intervention. The expectation is that children and young people will receive effective help as soon as they need it in a more coherent way. Underpinning this is the proposal for a common assessment framework to identify children’s needs as early as possible and to avoid duplication between agencies. A lead professional will develop a relationship with each child and ensure clear accountability for each case. The Government will produce the common assessment framework, in consultation with practitioners, building on existing assessment tools such as those discussed here. The expectation is that the framework will be implemented across all agencies. The benefits are described as being:

- the development of a common understanding among all practitioners of children’s strengths, risk and needs
- better understanding and better communication among practitioners and families
- a reduction of the need for children and families to repeat their stories each time they come into contact with a different agency
- support for the delivery of early, appropriate and streamlined services to children who need them

The Audit Commission’s recent review of the reforms implemented since 1998 endorses the desirability of a common assessment framework, but urges the Government to consider a common core of questions that follow the child.

Proposals for change within the youth justice system draw on the issues identified in the consultation responses to *Youth Justice – the Next Steps*. The focus is on preventing offending and tackling the factors that underlie it. Fuller use is to be made of parenting programmes, and more emphasis is to be given to helping young offenders re-engage with education, training and employment in the community. Assessment is a key step in identifying the children and young people who can benefit from these interventions.

The Government plans an update on the proposals outlined above in Autumn 2004. This will include details of the strategy for implementing the Green Paper.

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A literature review undertaken by the Dartington Social Research Unit considers the refocusing of children’s services to meet the objectives set out in the Green Paper.\(^{14}\) It suggests that, currently, many children are assessed several times as they grow up, often by several agencies at the same time. New assessments have seldom built upon previously collected information, which decreases efficiency and can alienate children and their families. The authors urge that it is important to find the right balance between diagnosis, prognosis and intervention. They argue that the early identification and accurate assessment of difficulties in children’s lives is critical to effective preventative strategies, and that accurate assessment requires the use of tried-and-tested instruments which address both risk and protection factors. Furthermore, a recommendation from a study of ‘hard to reach’ families in On Track areas\(^{15}\) stresses that the methods used to assess the needs of marginalised groups must be non-stigmatising. Not only do some assessments alienate families, they can also lead to misdiagnosis. We address these issues later in this manual.

The next steps identified in the response to *Every Child Matters* include not only the development of a common assessment framework but the necessity to improve information sharing between key agencies working with children, young people and families. Identifying children at risk of offending requires there to be efficient and effective sharing of critical information and the co-ordination of assessments that have been made by different professionals. The government has provided funding for ten Trailblazer areas (covering fifteen local authorities) to develop and test innovative approaches to information sharing and multi-agency working. It is essential, however, that professionals across the statutory and voluntary agencies working with children and young people and their families have a clear understanding of risk, resilience, protection and need and of the ways in which these aspects of a child’s life can be assessed. These guidelines for assessing risk are designed to complement and inform the proposals laid out by the Government, and to offer a point of reference which can be utilised in conjunction with any common assessment framework which might subsequently be devised.

### Legislation Relevant to Young People and Crime Reduction

#### The Children Act 1989

The Children Act 1989 is based on the principle that the welfare of children is paramount, and places a clear emphasis on parents and families retaining responsibility for children, irrespective of the marital status of parents. The Act covers both public and private aspects of the law relating to the care and upbringing of children and the provision of social services for them.

This Act introduced the concept of ‘parental responsibility’, and outlines the circumstances in which parents or guardians are deemed to hold parental responsibility for children. It covers the law relating to residence and contact orders, as well as giving courts the power to make prohibited steps orders and specific issue orders in respect of the children of separated parents, and orders for financial relief. A court should only make an order when not doing so is likely to be detrimental to the child (the ‘no-order presumption’).

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The Act also outlines the responsibilities of local authorities for supporting families, including the provision of day-care and services for families in need, and registration and inspection procedures. The Act provides the legislation which guides local authorities in respect of looked-after children, including the provision and regulation of accommodation, and fostering arrangements. The Children Act introduced the notion of the ‘reasonable’ parent, providing a ‘reasonable’ standard of care for a normal, healthy child. If the standard of care provided by the parents does not meet the measure of reasonableness the court can make care and supervision orders. The removal of children from their families is regarded as a serious decision which requires careful consideration. The expectation is that parents and social services departments will work in partnership if children are placed in residential care. Parents and children must be kept fully informed about processes and decisions which affect the children’s welfare.

In addition, the Act provides for the making of a range of supervision orders to ensure a child receives appropriate education, family assistance orders to provide social work support, emergency protection orders where there is concern that the child might suffer harm, and child assessment orders when harm is suspected. The emphasis is on constructive intervention with families.

**The Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

This Act has reformed the Youth Justice System in England and Wales so that it now has one overall aim: the prevention of youth offending. The expectation is that young people who offend will be systematically assessed, appropriately punished, helped and directed to change their behaviour and encouraged to compensate the victims of their crimes. Parents are expected to be more fully involved in the process of reforming their children. At the heart of the new Youth Justice System are Youth Offending Teams located in each area, consisting of representatives from the police, the probation service, social services and health and education officers.

The Act established the Youth Justice Board, which aims to tackle delays in the Youth Justice System, confront young people with the consequences of their offending, intervene to reduce the risk of reoffending, encourage reparation to victims, and enforce the responsibilities of parenting. The Youth Justice Board has provided funding for programmes which include bail supervision, support projects for young people, mentoring schemes, drug and alcohol programmes, education and training schemes, reparation schemes, and programmes demonstrating, to parents, better ways of dealing with children in trouble.

The Youth Justice Board is an executive non-departmental body established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It aims to tackle youth offending by advising the Home Secretary on prevention strategies, and monitoring performance and good practice in the youth justice system, in particular Youth Offending Teams.

http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provides for the exercise of anti-social behaviour orders, parenting orders, child safety orders, child curfews and the removal of truants to designated premises. Any of these orders can be evoked in order to reduce crime and disorder. The Act not only places the responsibility for crime reduction in the
hands of the police, but also requires local authorities, in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies, to engage in crime reduction activities.

The Act has given courts powers to implement parenting orders, which aim to help reinforce and support parental responsibility. A parenting order, which can be imposed when a young person is convicted of an offence or used in combination with an antisocial behaviour order or a child safety order, can consist of two elements. The first imposes a requirement on the parent or guardian to attend counselling or guidance sessions where they will receive help and support in dealing with their child. This element will normally form the core of the parenting order and must be imposed in all cases when such an order is made, except when a parent or guardian has previously received a parenting order. The intention is that parents will be able to learn how to set and enforce consistent standards of behaviour, and how to respond more effectively to challenging adolescent demands. The second element, which is discretionary, places requirements on the parent or guardian to exercise control over their child’s behaviour. These could include seeing that the child gets to school every day, or ensuring that he or she is home by a certain time at night.16

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 advocated a partnership approach to tackling crime. It placed a joint responsibility on local authorities and the police to work with other organisations from the voluntary, private and statutory sectors, as well as with local communities, to formulate crime reduction strategies. The 375 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships must set three-year targets for the reduction of crime in their area.

The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999

This Act received Royal Assent on 27 July 1999 and has two main parts, the first deals with sentencing in youth courts, the second with giving evidence in criminal proceedings. Part 1 states that the principal aim of the youth justice system is to prevent offending by children and young people. It provides for new sentences such as referral to a youth offender panel, and a final warning scheme to replace juvenile cautions. Referral to a youth offending panel by a magistrate is available for youngsters convicted for the first time and will aim to establish a personalised programme for young people in order to prevent further offending. Part 2 of the Act contains measures to help young or vulnerable witnesses give evidence in criminal proceedings.

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

The Home Secretary introduced the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill to the House of Commons in March 2003. The main effects of the Act are to make provision in connection with anti-social behaviour in England and Wales, to ensure that parents meet their responsibilities. Of particular relevance to parents and families are the following measures:

- Parental responsibilities (Education and Youth Justice) which establishes provisions to enable Local Education Authorities and schools to enter into

16 For further information about parenting orders see: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/cdact/parent.htm
Parenting Contracts. Although these are voluntary, refusal to sign or failure to comply can lead to the application for a Parenting Order.

- Dispersal of Groups which relates to the removal of a person under 16 to their place of residence after 9pm.
- Courts making an Anti-Social Behaviour Order against a person under 16 are required to make a Parenting Order against the child’s parents.
- Curfew Orders and Supervision Orders include a provision to enable courts to require a child offender to live for a period of up to 12 months with local authority foster parents.

Courts Act 2003


Human Rights

The UN Convention on the Rights of a Child sets out a number of rights for all children and young people. The UK Government agreed to abide by this convention in 1991, which means that the way children are treated in this country must take account of the Convention’s standards. Some of the rights that must be considered when making decisions about children are contained in the following Articles:

- Article 2 – children should be treated equally with no discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, religion, language, disability, opinion or family background.
- Article 3 – decisions about children must always be made with the children’s best interests paramount.
- Article 12 – children have the right to express their views on things that affect them. Children's wishes and feelings must be taken into account.
- Article 13 – children should have the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds.17

Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights, refers to the right to respect for private and family life. It reads as follows:

1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as in accordance with the law and as is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public safety or the economic well-being

of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health and morals or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

More information about the above Acts and other legislation can be found at:
http://www.legislation.hms.o.gov.uk/acts.htm

Data Protection

Anyone who needs to collect and process personal data must now comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. The Act has eight main principles, which state that data must be:

- fairly and lawfully processed
- used for limited purposes
- relevant and not excessive
- accurate
- not kept longer than absolutely necessary
- used in accordance with human rights
- kept secure
- not transferred to other countries without proper safeguards

Personal data about an individual cover both facts and opinions. Further information about data protection law can be found at http://www.dataprotection.gov.uk

Proposed Legislation

Children Bill 2003

The Children Bill, which encapsulates the proposals in the Green Paper, Every Child Matters, is described as the first step in a long-term programme of change as outlined above. Part 1 of The Bill provides for the appointment of a Children’s Commissioner for England to represent the views and interests of children and to report to Parliament on progress against the desired outcomes for children and young people. Part 2 of The Bill requires Local Authorities to make partnership arrangements with key partners and other relevant agencies in order to improve the well-being of children in the area. Moreover, the Bill requires local authorities to ensure clear accountability across children’s services through the appointment of a Director of Children’s Services.

Of particular relevance to this manual, the Bill provides the framework for the establishment of information sharing systems.18

18 The Children Bill and explanatory notes can be found on the Parliament website www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/pabills.htm
3. Risk and Protection

This section introduces the concepts ‘risk factors’, ‘protective factors’ and ‘resilience’, and describes how they interrelate to influence outcomes for children. An understanding of the ways in which these factors work is essential for conducting useful and reliable risk assessments.

Risk

Risk factors can be described as factors which

   either singly or in combination have been shown to render children’s failure to thrive more likely.\(^{19}\)

The concept of risk, and strategies for avoiding it, attract considerable interest from government, media, industry and the general public. There is increasing concern about the ‘risky’ world around us, and intense debate about what might constitute acceptable levels of risk. Moreover, while the term ‘risk’ implies the possibility of an undesirable or negative outcome, it also implies that this outcome can be avoided. Consequently, minimising risk has become a central element of social policy. This is particularly apparent in the area of crime reduction, where it is recognised that if risk factors can be identified early on in a child’s life, measures to reduce the existence and the effect of these factors can provide a long-term solution to reducing offending and antisocial behaviour. One of the major tasks for practitioners involved in delivering crime-reduction initiatives is to identify those children who are at greatest risk, so as to target resources more effectively. Figure 3.1 indicates some of the risk factors that the research discussed in this section has identified as relevant with regard to young people’s involvement in criminal or antisocial behaviour. The *Support from the Start* report published by DfES provides a useful breakdown of risk factors running from pre-birth through to adolescence.\(^{20}\)

The notion of risk-reduction in the field of crime prevention has its theoretical origins in research which has tracked people born in the 1950s. While much of this research has been conducted in the United States, there is a growing body of evidence arising from UK research. The work on identifying key risk factors is based on an understanding that offending is part of a larger syndrome of antisocial activity that begins in childhood and often persists into adulthood. This perspective is dependent on longitudinal studies which identify certain risk and protective factors that influence children’s behaviour. These factors can either promote resilience or lead to negative outcomes in later life. Establishing causality between factors and outcome, however, has been difficult. Only a limited understanding exists about the relationship of risk and protective factors to later offending and antisocial behaviour. In part, this is due to difficulties in defining antisocial behaviour, offending behaviour, and the concept of risk itself. All are socially constructed and subject to situational and contextual interpretation. Furthermore, the salient risk factors for, say, violent crime may not be the same as for alcohol abuse or fraud.


Figure 3.1 Risk factors which impact on children

- Poverty
- Quality of housing
  - Degeneration
  - High crime rates
  - Chronic community violence
- Transitions & mobility
- Laws and norms
  - Community disorganisation
  - Exposure to neurotoxins
- Early & persistent antisocial behaviour
- Academic failure
- Low degree of school commitment
- Exclusions
- Low expectations from teachers
- Poor attendance

- Parental depression
- Management problems
- Family structure
- Family instability
- Harsh & inconsistent discipline
- Lack of parental involvement
- Lack of parental monitoring & supervision
- History of high risk behaviours
- Family conflict
- Family size
- Attitudes to delinquent behaviour
- Delinquent peers
- Genetic or biological risk factors
- Perinatal trauma
  - Early malnutrition
  - ADHD
  - Language difficulty
  - Low intelligence
  - Early problem behaviour
- Individual

- Child

- Community

- School
The existence per se of one or more risk factors in a child’s life is not a particularly good predictor of outcomes. Moreover, children vary in terms of how they respond to risk, so that it cannot be assumed that two people with identical risk factors will experience the same outcomes. For instance, research demonstrates that siblings who grow up in the same family show disparate patterns of adjustment, and there is little understanding about why this occurs.\textsuperscript{21} Risk factors are context-dependent and vary over time and with different circumstances, and the nature and timing of risk factors influence outcome. The propensity for risk and/or negative outcomes is greater in times of transition, stress or crisis. Moreover, changes such as the introduction of CCTV, the availability of firearms or drugs, and demographic changes such as family breakdown all contribute to prevailing levels of crime. Relating factors to outcomes is insufficient without measuring the length of exposure to risk. There is a real danger that the perceived risk of an event which may be acute but short-lived, such as the temporary ill health of parents, may be accorded the same importance as a chronic event such as illness or disability which has been present over a long period of time with little prospect of improvement.

![Graph showing the relationship between number of risk factors and offending.](image)


Figure 3.2 Relationship between number of adverse factors and offending

The Youth Lifestyles Survey of the self-reported behaviour of young people found that the more risk factors there were in young people’s lives, the greater the risk of them committing offences.\textsuperscript{22} According to the survey, although only 6 per cent of the boys involved had four or more risk factors present in their lives, 85 per cent of these admitted to having committed an offence and more than half of them were classed as serious or persistent offenders.


persistent or serious offenders. As Figure 3.2 shows, more than half of the young men with four or more risk factors had admitted to involvement in serious or persistent offending. However, this suggests that almost half of the young men with four or more risk factors were not serious or persistent offenders.

Risk and protective factors are liable to fluctuate over time. Sometimes, one small change can have an important ripple effect on other factors thereby changing the likelihood of a young person becoming involved in criminal or antisocial activities. Indeed, Gilligan (2000) recommends that it is helpful to think in terms of ‘developmental pathways’ of progress, where a child’s pathway into or away from crime could be altered by a single incident known as a ‘turning point’. Moreover, the complexities of the interplay between risk factors and protective factors in promoting resilience in children are, as yet, uncharted. Protective factors may influence and react with risk factors to varying degrees and behave differently in the presence of other variables.

**Longitudinal Studies of Children**

Several longitudinal studies have tracked children over time and assessed which factors in their early lives are most closely associated with their subsequent behaviour. One of the most influential British studies is the *Cambridge Study in Delinquent Behaviour*, which has followed 411 males from the age of eight until their mid-forties. The study found that those children convicted at an early age tended to become the most persistent offenders. Offenders were also more likely than non-offenders to be involved in problem behaviours, including drug taking, alcohol abuse, gambling and indulging in irresponsible sexual practices.

For eight-year-olds, the six most important predictors of future offending were:

- antisocial behaviour in childhood (the best predictor)
- hyperactivity and attention deficit disorder
- low intelligence and poor school attainment
- family criminality
- family poverty
- poor parental child rearing behaviour

The Cambridge study found that the percentage of young people convicted for violent crimes was 3 per cent for those with no risk factors, increasing to 31 per cent of young people with four risk factors (low income, large family size, low IQ, and poor parenting). In other words, there seems to be a cumulative effect, in that the greater the number of risk factors to which a child is exposed, the greater the risk of future offending behaviour. Therefore, interventions that target multiple risk factors may

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26 Note that the evidence refers to convictions, and not offending *per se*. 
be more effective than those that address single factors. It should be borne in mind, however, that most of the children with four risk factors (69%) did not go on to become violent offenders.

A study of 600 eight-year-olds who were tracked until they were 30 found that aggressiveness displayed in school years had a good chance of turning into severe antisocial aggression in later life which eventually resulted in criminal behaviour and abuse. There were also indications that levels of aggression stayed stable over generations, being passed from parents to their children, who in turn became aggressive parents.

The Thousand Families Study in Newcastle upon Tyne followed a birth cohort up to the age of 33. The study concluded that rates of antisocial or criminal behaviour rose as the degree of deprivation rose. Deprivation resulting from poor parenting seemed to be particularly harmful. The authors found that some 60 per cent of men who came from the most high-risk and deprived backgrounds had a criminal record by the age of 33. They identify the linking mechanism between deprivation and crime as the degree of family stress and dysfunction that is often present in deprived families, but point out that a child’s individual temperament plays a significant part in determining outcomes.

A study of 500 delinquents and 500 non-delinquents carried out in the 1950s suggested that while poverty does not directly cause delinquency it has an indirect effect in inhibiting the capacity of families to parent, suggesting that reducing child poverty is a crucial element in reducing the risk of offending. The study also acknowledged the part played by a child’s personality, and the interplay between a child’s nature and the way they are treated by parents. It also concluded that three parental characteristics—harsh, erratic discipline, low levels of supervision and weak parent–child attachment—had a significant relationship to delinquency.

The Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study also points to the importance of family factors in determining levels of risk in children. This cohort study of approximately one thousand children born in 1972–3 found that offending by age 18 by young men was largely influenced by family factors, but that the type of offence committed correlated more closely with individual temperament. The authors argue that there are two processes at work: social regulation (family capacity for socialisation) and self-regulation (individual capacity for emotional control) and that the absence of both of these correlates with serious, violent offending.

Moffit and Harrington’s analysis of the Dunedin Study involved dividing the sample of boys into those who were Life-Course-Persistent (LCP) and those who were Adolescence-Limited (AL) delinquents. The authors found that the majority of boys in both categories first became antisocial during their adolescence and that only a

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few demonstrated antisocial behaviours in early childhood. They estimate that about 5 per cent of boys show antisocial behaviour that persists over the life course. The research identified significant differences between the two groups of delinquents with regard to socio-economic background. LCP boys were more likely to come from families in which there was a high degree of conflict, tended to have weaker attachment to their families, had poorer reading ability, had lower IQs, were more likely to be hyperactive or inattentive and tended to have lower self-esteem, than AL boys. AL boys tended to have levels of risk similar to non-delinquent boys’ at age 5 (when delinquency was not apparent) and at age 13.

Girls seem less likely than boys to have contact with risk factors, and the Dunedin Study indicated that girls had lower rates of nervous system dysfunction, difficult temperament, late development, hyperactivity, learning disabilities, reading failure and childhood conduct problems. Girls were also less likely than boys to become LCP offenders. On the other hand, girls’ pathways into AL delinquency tended to be similar to those of boys’, while affiliation with males was an important predictor of girls’ involvement in antisocial behaviour. Early puberty and being at a co-educational school increased this likelihood.

The Dunedin Study concludes that crime rates can be reduced by preventing either LCP or AL types of delinquency but the authors argue that interventions are more likely to be successful with regard to reducing AL delinquency, since those at risk may already have attributes that can be developed in order to promote resilience. Moreover, because the number of young people at risk of this type of delinquency is so high, intervention does not necessarily involve invasive targeting, labelling or psychological treatments. Nevertheless, some AL delinquents may have their transition back to pro-social lifestyles denied or delayed by their involvement in certain activities. For instance, sexual activity can lead to teenage parenthood; experimenting with drugs can lead to dependence; drunken driving can kill. The authors suggest that giving these young people more opportunities to contribute as adults in families and communities may lessen the attraction of crime.

The National Survey of Health and Development, a longitudinal study of 5,362 children born in Great Britain in March 1946, found a relationship between parental divorce/separation and later delinquency. Other factors that appeared to be related to delinquency included being part of a large family (more than two siblings), a lack of parental interest in education, and teachers’ identification of early problems. Protective factors that were identified included a low pupil–teacher ratio in school and being an only child. Nevertheless, the study concludes that it is dangerous to predict delinquency on the basis of childhood variables, since the risk of error is unacceptably high.

The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime found close associations between truancy, bad behaviour in school, negative attitudes to school and delinquency. Those children identified as delinquent were also less likely than non-delinquents to feel safe at school. Delinquency significantly correlated with the existence of negative parental attitudes to school.

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Although longitudinal studies have contributed to our understandings of risk and protection and its relationship to offending, it is still difficult to predict which individual children have a propensity to offend later in life. A group of US researchers (the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Study Group on Serious and Violent Juvenile Offenders) spent two years bringing together and analysing the results of data from long-term studies that have identified predictors of youth violence. They tested the strength of known associations, and reviewed previous research on individual factors. The researchers found that the best predictors of offending differed according to age group. For instance, for the 6–11 age group, committing an offence was the best predictor of future violence or serious delinquent behaviour, even if that offence did not involve violence (Figure 3.3). The strongest predictors for children aged 12–14 were a lack of social ties and association with antisocial peers, factors which have a lesser impact for the 6–11 age group.

![Predictor value (no effect = 0; maximum effect = 1)](image)


Figure 3.3 Predictors of violent or serious delinquency at age 6–11

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Although the risk associated with committing an offence is relatively high when compared with other factors, the value shown in Figure 3.3 suggests low predictive power and that most offenders, and substance users, do not go on to be serious or persistent offenders.

**Protection**

Protective factors are those internal and external forces that help children resist or ameliorate risk.35

Protective factors consist of ‘internal assets’ and ‘external strengths’. The more each of these factors is present, the greater the likelihood of resilience. Many of these factors seem to cut through ethnic, class, geographical and historical boundaries. People can play an ‘active’ role in negotiating risks, while some degree of risk may actually promote resilience. Families which function well can carry out a protective role for their members, as a report produced by the Government’s Social Exclusion Unit states:

A stable and supportive family can protect young people growing up in disadvantaged areas, balancing some of the risks they face and helping them to achieve their potential and make a successful transition to adulthood.36

Protective factors ought to be seen as mechanisms or processes rather than as discrete variables. There are four broad types of protective process, those which:

1. Reduce the impact of, or exposure to, risk.
2. Reduce chain reactions to negative experience.
4. Provide positive relationships and new opportunities.

While evidence suggests that many children with clusters of risk factors experience poor outcomes in later life and may display antisocial or offending behaviour, further examination shows that many children who are subject to the same sort of stressors, often without significant intervention, go on to lead law-abiding and successful lives. One reason these children thrive is because protective processes are at work in their lives that help them to develop resilience in the face of adversity. This has implications for intervention strategies, because when risk factors are not amenable to change, interventions can work to provide compensatory experiences or to enhance protective factors to offset their effects on children’s lives.37

Protective factors can be generated from individual characteristics, such as problem-solving skills, intelligence, sense of autonomy and an achievement orientation, but the behaviour of children is also influenced by their interactions with their family, their school and their community. In relation to the family, many of the protective factors identified by research clearly relate to the consistency and quality of care and support that an individual experiences during infancy, childhood and adolescence. Children in

discordant and disadvantaged homes are more likely to overcome their disadvantages if they attend schools that have a good academic record and where teachers are attentive and caring.  

Children and young people in disadvantaged areas are generally considered to be at greater risk of offending and antisocial behaviour than those brought up in areas that are more affluent. However, certain community characteristics, such as social support networks provided by kin, neighbours and social welfare agencies, seem to operate as protective factors.

Protection might also come from restricting opportunities for criminal and antisocial behaviour through policing, street wardens, CCTV, neighbourhood watch schemes, etc. Table 3.1 provides a summary of factors that serve to protect children from the risk of involvement in criminal and antisocial behaviour.

Resilience

Longitudinal studies of the health and development of children have tended to focus on the incidences of poor outcomes and of ‘at risk’ children. Recently, however, it has been noted that the majority of children with identifiable risk factors do not engage in problem behaviours. Consequently, there is a growing interest in discovering what it is that enables ‘at risk’ children to achieve positive outcomes against the odds. This has led to the emergence of the concept of resilience, which has been defined as

the process of, capacity for, or outcome of, successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances.

Resilience might also be seen as ‘overcoming the odds’ or ‘coping’ with adversity. It is the human capacity of individuals to transform and change no matter what risks they are exposed to. It is not a fixed quality, but something that is itself subject to change. Children and young people can be more or less resilient depending on the complex interactions between the risk and protective factors at different stages in their lives. Therefore, it can be just as dangerous to label children as resilient as it is to label them at risk. Resilience is often confused with protective factors. However, resilience is dependent on the complex interplay between risk and protective factors.

Children can display resilient behaviour in three primary ways:

1. By achieving positive outcomes even though they are at high risk.
2. By adapting successfully to stressful experiences and situations.
3. By recovering quickly from a crisis or trauma.

---

Table 3.1  Summary of protective factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE EVENTS</th>
<th>SELF</th>
<th>FAMILY</th>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>COMMUNITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full term birth</td>
<td>Personal Attributes</td>
<td>Love and attachment</td>
<td>Good Teachers</td>
<td>Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Satisfactory birth weight</td>
<td>– Easy temperament</td>
<td>– Parents</td>
<td>– Positive relationships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Injury free birth</td>
<td>– Academic ability</td>
<td>– Siblings</td>
<td>– Knowledge of children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Able bodied</td>
<td>– Emotional strength</td>
<td>– Extended family</td>
<td>– Positive behaviour management skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued good health</td>
<td>– Sense of autonomy</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>– Positive sense of efficacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities at major life transitions</td>
<td>– Sense of humour</td>
<td>– Material</td>
<td>– High expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting significant persons</td>
<td>– Social competence</td>
<td>– Emotional</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving into a more supportive community</td>
<td>– Physical competence</td>
<td>Parenting practices</td>
<td>– Time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beliefs about self</td>
<td>– Consistency</td>
<td>– Other adults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– High self esteem</td>
<td>– Positive expectations</td>
<td>– Agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Positive self efficacy</td>
<td>Models of Resiliency</td>
<td>School climate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Sense of purpose</td>
<td>– Parents</td>
<td>– Child focused</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Positive attitude</td>
<td>– Siblings</td>
<td>– Collaborative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Self confidence</td>
<td>– Extended family</td>
<td>– Caring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive links with school</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Safe/secure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Empowering</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive links with</td>
<td></td>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>school</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Relevant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Enriched</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Age appropriate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special programmes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Social (life skills)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Academic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>– Protective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Garmezy et al. \(^{42}\) (1984) identify three models that can help in understanding resilience. They name these the 'compensatory', the 'challenge' and the 'conditional' models.

1. The compensatory model works on the principle that risk and protective factors have a relationship with each other that serves to allow prediction of outcomes. The existence of multiples of either risk or protective factors can overwhelm the balance and lead to either positive or negative outcomes.

2. The challenge model works on the basis that risk factors can enhance resilience if they are not overwhelming. Some degree of challenge, if dealt with adequately, can lead to increased confidence in facing future stressors and thus enhance a child’s ability to cope.

3. The conditional model proposes that children’s personal attributes, or temperament, work to lessen or increase the impact of risk factors.

The *International Resilience Project*, \(^{43}\) which took place in 30 countries, examined and identified resilient traits in children. This culturally-sensitive initiative worked from the following set of assumptions:

- protective factors promote resilience
- adversity can consist of day-to-day events, not just major traumatic events such as famine or war
- resilience can be enhanced both as a reaction to an event and in anticipation of adversity
- children aged under 11 are at a critical age for developing resilience

The study, which consisted of interviews with teachers, parents and children, found that adults and older children were more likely to demonstrate resilience than were younger children, and concluded that adults must play an important role in promoting and enabling the development of resilience in children.

A study by Howard and Johnson \(^{44}\) concluded that the greater the number of protective factors and processes surrounding young people the more likely they are to display resilience. During interviews with 71 young people, the authors concluded that youngsters who appeared to be demonstrating resilience had a stronger sense of attachment to other people, had a more positive outlook on life, had more plans for the future, and felt they had more control over their own lives, than the non-resilient young people. Table 3.2 outlines the primary characteristics demonstrated by each group of these children.


### Table 3.2 Characteristics of resilient and non-resilient children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resilient children</th>
<th>Non-resilient children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>At home</strong></td>
<td><strong>At home</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a sense of autonomy or personal agency, and believe they can control their lives.</td>
<td>Often blame their failures on others and their victim orientation is sometimes encouraged by family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are more likely to discuss problems with family members, and to be encouraged to face up to difficulties in constructive ways.</td>
<td>Have few strategies for dealing with problems. Their most common ones are lashing out or fatalistically accepting circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have chores and tasks to carry out for the good of the family.</td>
<td>Are often supposed to have chores but rarely do them since nobody forces them to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel connected to at least one adult whose unconditional positive regard can be relied upon.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At school</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk with pride about personal achievements and accomplishments (achievement being relative).</td>
<td>Feel that teachers ‘pick on’ them, ignore them or favour kids ‘who are good at stuff’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel a sense of belonging and connectedness to people outside the family.</td>
<td>Have poor study skills and few useful learning strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have positive views and definite plans about their futures.</td>
<td>Are less inclined to report attachment to other people or institutions outside the family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are prone to blaming others for their lack of success and dismiss rather than attempt to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are more likely than resilient children to talk about being involved in violent interpersonal conflict.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Need

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 defines a child as being in need if:

- he or she is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision of services
- his or her health or development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural) is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision of such services
- he or she is disabled
Need can be defined as an individual’s, a family’s or a community’s ability to benefit from a known intervention. Therefore, ‘need’ exists where there is an identifiable, effective and available solution to a perceived problem. It is often difficult for practitioners to differentiate between children and families ‘at risk’ and those children and families ‘in need’. This may stem in part from the association of the concept of risk in child welfare terms with danger and negative outcomes. The concepts often run hand in hand, but are not always linked. Risk can help to promote positive adjustment in some cases. Moreover, a child’s being assessed as being ‘at risk’ of future antisocial behaviour does not mean that he or she is ‘in need’. Conversely, children ‘in need’ may not be seen to be at risk of offending and thus may not receive interventions which are specifically aimed at reducing offending, even though those interventions might benefit them in other ways.

The key differences in the focus of needs assessment and risk assessment are:

- risk assessment focuses on the key indicators in children’s lives that show their propensity for non-healthy development
- needs assessment focuses on the key indicators in children’s lives that indicate that additional intervention is required to enable a child to reach a reasonable standard of development

However, although risk assessment and needs assessment are not the same thing, they often run alongside each other and may become intertwined and confused. Nevertheless, assessment of need is crucial to determining appropriate interventions, while a young person may have a range of other needs which are not directly associated with criminal or antisocial behaviour. It may be necessary to meet these other needs in order to affect future behaviour. The primary purposes of needs assessment have been defined as:

- providing consistency – ensuring that certain types of problems are addressed by all staff
- providing conciseness – providing a quick ‘read’ of a young person’s problems for those who will be working with them
- facilitating case planning – providing the foundation for a treatment plan
- prioritising workload – ensuring services are provided where they are likely to be most effective
- producing management information – providing a database for agency planning and evaluation
- identifying need for specialist services

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Relationships between Risk, Protection, Resilience and Need

Resilience in children depends largely on the interplay between certain risk and protective factors. However, little is known about how these factors work together and interact. There are several models for understanding the relationship between risk, resilience and problem behaviours, three of which are outlined below.

The additive model

The additive model involves viewing risk and protective factors as being on a continuum, as polar opposites that counterbalance each other. The presence of a particular risk factor directly influences the likelihood of a negative outcome, whereas the presence of a protective factor directly influences the likelihood of a positive outcome. According to this perspective, resilience may become less likely as risk accumulates. The additive model, which is commonly used to quantify risk, takes little account of the presence of protective factors that are not, in themselves, the polar opposite of a risk factor. For instance, the existence of a mentor in the life of a disadvantaged child could be construed as being an important protective factor in that child's life, but the absence of a mentor could not be construed as necessarily constituting a risk to a child. This has implications for the scoring of risk assessment instruments since, in general, items will be scored by adding and subtracting known risk and protective factors. Nevertheless, most assessment instruments use additive principles because understanding of the way risk and protective factors interact is still extremely limited.

The interaction model

The interaction model posits that risk and protective factors are dynamic and interact with each other with varying effects. Protective factors only have a positive effect when levels of risk are high. When they are low, they have little effect. Kirby and Fraser offer the useful analogy of immunisation to illustrate this point. Immunisation in itself has little effect in promoting someone's health, but operates as a significant protective factor when that person is exposed to the disease.

The interaction framework sees protective factors as acting in three ways to counter the effects of risk. First, a protective factor can act as a 'buffer' against the effects of any number of risk factors (such as the presence of a mentor for a boy experiencing problems at school and inconsistent parenting). Secondly, a protective factor can act to break a chain or cycle of risk factors that can multiply with devastating effects. One example of this would be intensifying parental supervision which could stop children becoming involved in substance abuse, and consequently addiction and crime.


Finally, protective factors could serve to prevent the onset of risk factors. Likeable personal characteristics of children, for instance, could prevent neglect or abuse.

Interaction between risk and protective factors also happens on several different levels of influence: these are the community, school, family, environment and individual levels. Thus, the balance of risk and protective factors across these levels will influence how they interact with each other and complicate the relationships involved. Factors may have differential severity depending on the ecological level at which they are based. A multi-systems ecological approach which examines the range of relationships and interactions between risk and protective factors at all of these levels is likely to be helpful in identifying how resilience can be fostered in children’s lives. An assessment scoring system based on this model would ideally use multiplicative methods, but the evidence base regarding how to weight specific factors is far from adequate. Consequently, one should be cautious about drawing inferences from assessment tools alone. A high score on any particular assessment instruments does not necessarily mean that a child will commit offences or engage in antisocial behaviour in the future.

The pathways model

During the life of an individual, a series of transitions or points of change occur, where risk and protective factors play an enhanced role in the production of resilience. A child’s pathway through life, into or away from crime, has to negotiate several transitions (turning points or crossroads), based on age, development or life events, such as the transition from home to school, or moving to a new area. The effect, therefore, of specific risk and protection factors depends greatly on timing, and on the impacts of previous transitions. If, for example, a child is developmentally ready to start school, and is coping with the changes successfully, there is a good chance that the experience and development of these coping strategies will help to foster the resilience needed to cope with later transitions. In this respect, the relationships between risk and protection are not simply cumulative or multiplicative but context-specific, greatly dependent on timing.49 Kirby and Fraser50 suggest that a model of resilience needs to be based on the premise that both additive and multiplicative effects exist in the relationship between risk and protective factors and that these effects should be understood within the framework of the ecological system. Moreover, an understanding of these effects must take account of the development of children over time, and changes in their levels of resilience at different points in their lives.

The assessment of need requires an understanding of the way risk and protective factors are influenced by intervention strategies. Once an assessment of risk has been made, the focus can turn to the identification of need in order to establish which children and families who were defined as at risk are in need of, and can benefit from, any interventions being provided. Different interventions tend to have different impacts on specific risk and protective factors, and these impacts need to be taken into account.51 Further information about this can be found in Section 9.


50 op. cit. (1997).

51 Further information about risk and resilience factors can be found in Youth Justice Board (2001) Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Youth Crime and Effective Interventions
4. The Assessment Process

Assessment of risk generally involves the following five steps:\(^{52}\)

1. Defining the purpose and objectives of the assessment.
2. Specifying appropriate questions.
3. Selecting appropriate methods, tools and resources.
4. Collecting data.
5. Analysing data and interpreting results.

It involves analysis of information about the subjects of the assessment – children, families, schools or neighbourhoods – collected via one or more of the following sources.

**Gathering Information**

**Personal files**

Several agencies, such as schools, social services, health services, police forces, etc., routinely record information about children and their families. This information can be of use in an assessment process but it tends to be scattered among a range of different databases, and data protection conditions are likely to restrict access to it.

**Official statistics**

These consist of quantitative data collected by somebody else, typically a government department. Official statistics are a useful resource when aggregate data are required, at the neighbourhood or school level for instance, but data that are available may not address the kinds of question that are of particular interest. Although the range of data available from National Statistics\(^{53}\) is increasing, official statistics are not likely to be adequate on their own, except for facilitating the most basic level of targeting.

**Social surveys**

These consist of written questionnaires that are usually administered to a large number of people. Social surveys typically result in numbers, percentages, averages and other mathematical devices that show how a population looks, behaves, thinks or reacts. Community surveys can facilitate more reliable targeting of initiatives than is possible by relying on official statistics alone. They might be used as screening

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instruments to identify subsets of a given population that are appropriate for further, more in-depth assessment.

Survey questionnaires can be completed by the subjects themselves (e.g. children), or by other people who have knowledge about them (e.g. parents, health visitors and schoolteachers). Surveys can provide subjective information from children, parents, schoolteachers or other people who have a day-to-day involvement in the life of a child. The survey approach has limited value, because it can only address the attitudes or perceptions of the person who completes the questionnaire, and it is not possible to probe when responses are unclear. Surveys might, however, be conducted through an interviewer who reads out the questions and records an informant’s responses. Alternatively, questionnaires might be completed in the presence of a facilitator who can clarify questions and/or help people who have reading or language difficulties. Telephone surveys are becoming increasingly commonplace since they are cheaper to carry out than face-to-face interviews while a study conducted on behalf of Home Office concluded that it is feasible to conduct random telephone surveys of local residents about crime-related issues.54

Assessment instruments

These generally consist of a set of questions, the responses to which can be combined to create a single indicant, or scale, that measures the degree to which a certain characteristic is present. The person being assessed, or else someone, such as a parent, who has an important role in that person’s life, normally completes the instrument. It can be useful to combine questionnaires (assessment instruments) completed by the subject of an assessment with in-depth interviews, to obtain standardised information about certain risk factors. Some assessment instruments are also suitable for inclusion in survey questionnaires.

In-depth interviews

These are conversations with individuals conducted by trained interviewers, normally with the aim of collecting specific information about one person. Interviews can be completely unstructured, but often include pre-set questions that may allow quantification. They tend to enable a deeper understanding than can be achieved through the survey approach, since the interviewer has the opportunity to clarify issues and probe for responses.

Observation

This allows assessment of the nature of interactions between assessment subjects and significant others: parents, siblings, schoolteachers, etc. The use of observational coding schemes allows for greater ease of measurement and less observer bias, but observation is inevitably subjective and analysis of outputs which may include coding frames and field notes, etc. is difficult, time-consuming and liable to observer bias.

Focus groups

These involve several individuals taking part in in-depth guided discussions with a trained moderator. Focus groups might be used to explore particular issues about communities, or as a beginning step to gather information about a particular group of people whom services might target. They represent a good way of finding out about the perceived norms of a certain group and can provide detailed information about people's experiences and perceptions.

Each of the above methods of gathering information has its own values, benefits and drawbacks. A combination of methods is likely to provide a more comprehensive and thorough assessment than is possible using a single approach. When assessing individuals it is helpful to combine interviews with observation of the interviewee's environment and their interactions with others, while completed assessment instruments might help in developing a rounded picture. By contrast, the process of assessing areas or schools is likely to employ statistical information, social surveys and, possibly, focus groups. Table 4.1 suggests the circumstances in which each of the data gathering methods is appropriate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data sources</th>
<th>Deciding which populations (neighbourhoods, schools, etc.) to target</th>
<th>Deciding whether a particular child is at risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal files</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official statistics</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social surveys</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment instruments</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessing Risk

The main objectives underlying a risk-focused approach to crime prevention are to:

- focus on known risk factors
- enhance protective factors
- provide early, developmentally appropriate intervention
- address multiple risk factors

The purpose of assessment in such circumstances is to identify risk rather than need, although need is an important concept when assessment involves gathering information that determines which interventions are appropriate. In this context, risk relates to potential harm to others rather than harm to the child, although practitioners who provide interventions will inevitably have to deal with child protection concerns. Therefore, any influences that increase the probability of a child
becoming involved in crime or antisocial behaviour during adolescence and beyond constitute risk. Risk factors range from individual, biological conditions to broad environmental circumstances that affect the life-chances of children. For example, there is evidence that perinatal trauma functions as an early biological risk factor for later academic difficulties.\(^{55}\) School failure, in turn, represents a risk factor for delinquency, and association with peers who are delinquent may lead to the maintenance of antisocial, aggressive behaviour.\(^{56}\)

The range of factors that might affect the potential for young people to engage in criminal and antisocial behaviour is extremely broad. The literature on risk and resilience, summarised in Section 2 of this manual, indicates that children’s development is influenced by their personal characteristics and also by the family, school, peer group, neighbourhood and community contexts in which they live. Thus, childhood consists of engagements between the child and various interdependent systems. A child usually lives in a family. The family usually lives in a neighbourhood where family members interact with other families, and with a range of other people. As children grow up, they generally enter a school system where their behaviour is influenced by their interaction with teachers and other children, and by the level of attainment they are able to achieve. The underlying social, economic, political and cultural climate in which development takes place might also be crucial.

**Predicting Outcomes**

If services are provided on a universal basis to all children, assessment of risk is unlikely to feature in decisions about who gets what, although it might be important in shaping interventions to fit the needs of individual children. If interventions are targeting particular children, or particular areas, it is important to be able to predict which neighbourhoods and which children are exposed to the highest levels of risk. This is not an easy task. When evaluating the risk of a young person becoming involved in crime and antisocial behaviour, it is important to be clear about what criminal activities and which behaviours are involved. Self-report studies suggest that involvement in criminal activity is relatively high among young people. Sixty per cent of males and 40 per cent of females admit to having committed an offence before reaching the age of eighteen, the most common offences being fighting and buying and selling stolen goods.\(^{57}\) The factors that constitute risk are likely to vary with the behaviour in question. For instance, the predictors of involvement in property crime seem unlikely to be the same as those that predict violent behaviour. This may be more problematic with regard to antisocial behaviour, which can encompass an even more diverse range of activities, as the following list taken from a Home Office web site\(^{58}\) demonstrates:


\(^{58}\) From Antisocial Behaviour Toolkit http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/as00.htm
• noise
• using and selling drugs
• unkempt gardens (e.g. those which attract dumping of goods, creating eyesores)
• alcohol and solvent abuse
• criminal behaviour
• prostitution
• verbal abuse
• uncontrolled pets and animals
• intimidating gatherings of young people
• harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents)
• damage to property (including graffiti and vandalism)
• intimidation
• rubbish dumping and misuse of communal areas
• riding/cycling on footpaths
• aggressive begging

Several questions are important in defining the task of risk assessment. These include the following:

1. What is the outcome being assessed?
When evaluating the risk of a young person becoming involved in crime and antisocial behaviour, it is important to be clear about what criminal activities and which behaviours are involved.

2. What is the time period to be covered by interventions?
Evidence suggests that some young people discontinue criminal and antisocial behaviour upon entering adulthood. Thus, the degree of risk for future offending behaviour may be more highly associated with age than with any other factor, while delinquent behaviour may be on the wane by the time interventions become active.

3. What is the purpose of the risk assessment?
Assessments might be used for predicting the risk of future behaviour (e.g. for sentencing purposes) or for the management and planning of risk-reduction interventions.

The choice of strategy for assessing risk and resilience depends on the outcome being assessed, the purpose of assessment and the age of the target population. Assessment can aim to:

1. Assess the levels of risk and resilience affecting children within prescribed populations.
2. Establish which children ought to be targeted for inclusion in a programme.

3. Assess the needs of individual children referred to a programme.

A distinction can be made between risk assessments that are *prediction-oriented* and those that are *management-oriented*:

A *prediction-oriented* approach might be used to inform decisions about disposal after an offence has been committed: in these circumstances, it is helpful to gauge the element of risk in respect of a more lenient disposal. It is generally used to identify which children are likely to be at greatest risk, and is aided by primarily *static* factors that are not subject to change, such as gender, family background, history of offending, etc. Community surveys or school surveys that aim to detect numbers of children and young people who are at risk tend to use a prediction approach, but they are not necessarily restricted to measuring static factors.

A *management-oriented* approach aims to identify elements of risk that have the potential to change as a result of planned interventions, for example programmes that aim to enhance parenting skills. These changes might occur within an individual child or within a child’s living situation (improved parenting, neighbourhood renewal, etc.). Among the dynamic risk factors for juvenile offending are current familial instability, ineffective parenting, association with delinquent peers, poor use of leisure time and the presence of conduct problems.

Assessment of young people usually employs *predictive* and *management-oriented* approaches, since the aim is to identify which children and young people are at risk, and to ascertain how interventions might alleviate risk.

**A Multiple-gating Approach**

It is possible to move from broader assessment which identifies who is at risk to assessment that focuses on how risk affects the needs of individual children. This involves a *multiple-gating approach* 59 (Figure 4.1), which typically begins with a broad assessment tool, such as a student or teacher survey, carried out in prescribed locations. A multiple-gating approach tends to progress from community-based risk assessment through to the assessment of the needs of an individual child who is identified as at risk.

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At the end-stage of assessment, which inevitably involves face-to-face contact, it is important to have procedures in place that ensure that any subsequent referrals are based on complete information about the child, including information which takes account of cultural divergence. This is more likely if the following steps have been taken.\textsuperscript{60}

1. Adequate information about the language dominance and proficiency of the parents has been obtained and, if needed, an interpreter/translator has been identified to facilitate communication with the family.

2. Information about the language dominance and proficiency of other caregivers or children who interact routinely with the child has been identified.

3. The family has been asked to share their impressions of the child’s development.

4. With the family’s permission, other service providers and caregivers have been asked to share their impressions of the child’s development.

5. If needed, a cultural guide has been asked to help interpret a child’s behaviour.

6. All developmental domains, including hearing and vision, have been screened.

7. Screenings for language proficiency and dominance have been completed.

8. The child has been observed in their home environment.

**Choice of Assessment Procedure**

It is important to be aware that the type of assessment process used might influence outcomes. For instance, a youth offending team compared three approaches to assessing drug use among young people, i.e. a structured questionnaire, an unstructured interview and an activity-focused interview. They found the questionnaire approach was the most practical, ensured that all of the questions were addressed and was the least time consuming approach. However, young people seemed to respond better to the other two approaches which were twice more likely to obtain admissions of drug use than were structured questionnaires.

This kind of individualised assessment takes into consideration individual family dynamics, cultural issues and the individual needs of children. It is, however, a time-consuming process that is expensive to operate and requires trained personnel. The costs of engaging in this level of assessment might outweigh the benefits.

Providers of interventions will have to consider how much to invest in individual assessment of targeted children. For some programmes, assessment might be less stringent than for others, but there ought to be a clear statement about what assessment will involve, and what criteria will determine whether a child, or a family, will be offered an intervention. Establishing partnerships with other agencies could

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enable the sharing of assessment data, thereby pooling resources and avoiding duplication.

**Working in Partnership**

Multi-agency partnership working is a key feature of the Governments’ preventative approach to working with children at risk of offending and their families. Agencies working together to a common aim, sharing clear, common objectives and having a commitment and willingness to learn from one another can help development of a consistent approach that reduces the risk of gaps in provision, or of children ‘falling through the net’. Other advantages of working in partnership include:

- improved service planning
- sharing of responsibilities
- a holistic approach
- the opportunity to pool ideas and resources
- sharing skills

Some key elements of effective partnership working are:

- good communication
- clear objectives
- named link people
- shared core values and priorities
- involvement of children and families
- a commitment to succeed

**Information sharing**

In order to ensure consistency of approach and to avoid duplication of assessments, it is desirable that agencies work in partnership with each other to develop ways of sharing the information that they have about children at risk and the Children Bill 2004 sets out criteria for sharing of databases between children’s services authorities. Information sharing between agencies provides the potential for enabling partners to:

- avoid duplication of assessment
- develop more efficient referral procedures
- identify gaps in provision
- ensure consistency of approach
- keep track of children and their families as they move between services and across geographical boundaries
- identify problems earlier, provide support sooner
- tailor better support
- promote and support multi-agency working
- reduce the likelihood of a child missing out on support they need

Partner agencies should develop an information sharing protocol, signed by partner agencies to ensure that information sharing takes place effectively.

**Developing an information sharing protocol**
An agreed protocol for information sharing will help ensure that information is handled in a proper manner and that agencies are compliant with legal obligations. Agencies needing to obtain information about children and families should consider:

- the purpose of the information
- where to obtain the information from
- how much information is needed to fulfil the specific purpose
- whether it is in the public interest to share the information
- the legal obligations and implications of sharing the information

When agencies have considered these issues, they can then develop common protocols with prospective partners which outline each signatory’s expectations and obligations, and accepted practice with regard to the following:

- legal requirements
- who can share the information and for what purpose
- how requests for information are made
- what criteria are in place to accept or refuse requests
- what formats data will be supplied in
- agreed timescales for sharing data
- procedures for dealing with problems or complaints
- any special data handling requirements

It will also be necessary to appoint a designated person in each agency, to take responsibility for monitoring requests for data and authorising transfer in accordance with the agreed protocol.

All information sharing procedures should be subject to regular review to ensure the meeting of legal requirements and maintenance of best practice. More guidance on information sharing protocols can be found on the Home Office Crime Reduction website at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk

The Youth Justice Board has produced Guidance to Youth Justice Teams on Information Sharing. It is available on http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk

The Risks Inherent in Assessment

Inaccuracy

Risk assessment is a long way from being an exact science. Deciding which children are at risk is in itself a risky exercise, since the chances of making false positive or false negative assessments are exceptionally high. These two kinds of assessment can be differentiated as follows:

a false negative assessment identifies someone as not being at risk when they actually are. This might lead to a child being denied an intervention that they need, and to an intervention missing children for whom it was intended.

a false positive assessment suggests that a person is at risk when they are not. Such an assessment may lead to a child receiving an unneeded intervention, and to waste of scarce resources, or even to increasing a child’s level of risk by involving them in programmes with high-risk peers.
Some risk factors, such as being male for instance, are easy to attribute. However, subjective factors such as ‘poor parenting’ are less readily identified, which means that assessment tends to require interpretation and human decisions which are largely subjective and based on socially constructed norms of behaviour.

**Labelling young people**

Some observers have cautioned that language identifying children as being at risk can serve as a ‘euphemism for racism, class-based biases, sexism and regional inequalities’. It is also important to ensure that defining a child as ‘at risk’ of becoming involved in antisocial behaviour does not label them as a problem before they have actually done anything wrong. The Young Minds charity has warned that the gathering of risk information raises ‘important questions around what guarantees can be given that such information will remain confidential’ and about what steps can be taken to address the fact that ‘references to emotional difficulties’ could be seen by pupils and parents as stigmatising.

Defining young people as ‘at risk’ could lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy if people who are closely involved in the life of the child consciously or unconsciously develop low expectations of them. With this in mind, it might be advisable to confine assessment to groups of children – in a particular neighbourhood or in the same class at school, for instance – rather than assessing individual children. This is not to say, however, that schools and communities do not themselves suffer detrimental consequences if selected for interventions because someone has identified them as being a problem. When a neighbourhood is defined as a ‘problem’, everyone who lives there can become subjected to discrimination and negative stereotyping. In addition, initiatives that focus on bad behaviour within specific localities may lead to increased insularity and intolerance.

**Focusing on deficits**

Assessment of risk at an individual level tends to lead to a treatment regime based around a deficit model which identifies children and families at risk as being ‘deficient’ in some way and tends to obscure recognition of their capacities and strengths as well as their individuality and uniqueness. Since the focus is on the flawed nature of the individual, rather than on the flawed nature of systems, there is a danger of blaming victims, and of subjecting individuals designated to be ‘at risk’ to interventions which try to change them so that they fit into existing structures and programmes when it may be more appropriate to consider how structures and programmes might be changed.

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**Ethical Considerations**

When implementing any sort of targeting strategy involving assessments of children and families, consideration must be given to the effects of this involvement on the children and families concerned. Some organisations have an ethical code in place which serves as a guideline, but many agencies depend upon the integrity of staff to consider these issues. In a useful discussion of ethical standards to be followed by practitioners engaged in primary prevention work, Pope\(^{64}\) outlines several general principles that should be observed:

1. Do no harm to participants.
2. Practice only with competence.
3. Do not exploit.
4. Treat people with respect for their dignity as human beings.
5. Protect confidentiality
6. Act, except in the most extreme circumstance, only after obtaining informed consent.

**Doing no harm**

One should make all efforts to ensure that all reasonable efforts have been made to identify the hidden and unexpected harm that might befall a young person as a result of assessment and/or action leading from assessment. This includes psychological harm as well as physical harm, and the risk that interventions leading from assessment might make circumstances worse.

**Practicing with competence**

Practitioners must recognise the limits to their own professional knowledge and expertise, as well as the limitations of any tools or instruments and the boundaries in interpretation of any results. Where experience and knowledge are lacking, practitioners have a responsibility to make use of all the resources at their disposal to increase their knowledge and enhance their training in order to improve the quality of the service they provide.

**Non-exploitation**

Those conducting assessments have a duty to maintain standards of conduct in their work, co-operate with other agencies where appropriate and develop non-exploitative relationships with the people being assessed. Assessment can seem intrusive and personal and it is not acceptable to use extensive procedures unless the information they provide is absolutely necessary and the reason for its collection is made clear to the child and family in question.

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Treating people with respect

Respect for the human rights and dignity of, and the differences in, others is paramount. Families and/or children must be made aware of their right to privacy and intrusions into their privacy kept to a minimum.

Confidentiality

In light of government plans for agencies involved with children to increase information sharing and for adoption of Common Assessment procedures, it may be difficult to guarantee complete confidentiality to young people and families who are involved in assessment. Nevertheless, parties providing information for assessment purposes should be fully informed about which information is confidential. It is, therefore, important to

- identify the sorts of information which will be treated as confidential
- be aware of legislation that governs confidentiality
- make sure that all involved clearly understand the boundaries between what is and is not confidential
- develop effective mechanisms for handling documents to ensure confidentiality
- develop procedures to guard against the accidental disclosing of information

Informed consent

When conducting assessments it is vital that families are kept informed and are willing participants in the process. Adopting the principles of informed consent is one way of ensuring this is happening. Informed consent can be defined as happening where:

1. An individual has the capacity (understanding) to consent.
2. They have been told fully, in language they understand, what the assessment process involves.
3. They have given their consent freely without duress or undue pressure.
4. Their consent is appropriately documented.

5. Developing and Using Assessment Instruments

Developing Instruments

Assessment tools might consist simply of aids to counting those risk factors that can be readily identified as being present or absent through observation or knowledge about individual children and their families. Some important risk factors cannot be detected through simple observation, however. For instance, it might not be immediately obvious whether a child has a psychological condition, a poor relationship with a parent, weak social ties or a negative attitude to school. Consequently, assessment instruments that can measure the presence of some risk and protective factors may be required. However, assessment tools have limited accuracy in predicting which children will become involved in antisocial behaviour, especially when there is no evidence of behavioural problems at time of assessment. Consequently, assessment of individuals relies on interviews backed up by instruments that measure the extent to which certain risk and resilience factors are present, and on a considerable degree of professional judgement. Annexes 1 and 2 provide information about some assessment instruments that have been employed in attempts to measure the extent to which some risk factors are present within young people and families.

Many of the available instruments focus on a particular risk factor, while others aim to consider multiple factors. Despite the care that has gone into the development of most of these instruments it is not possible to be sure about their predictive capacity. The relationship between risk and resilience is a complex one, and there is always a potential for error in deciding which children are at risk and which are not.

It is unlikely that it will ever be known how accurate predictions that particular individuals will engage in criminal or antisocial behaviour are, since assessment usually triggers some sort of intervention aimed at ameliorating the identified risk or at boosting protection.

The basic premises of a useful assessment instrument are:

1. It has been designed to measure specific factors.
2. It has been developed on the basis of evidence.
3. It has been rigorously evaluated, piloted and refined.

Assessment involves collecting information, interpreting that information and deciding on particular actions. This information could be routinely gathered by people who are involved with a child – for example, schoolteachers observing and routinely recording misbehaviour – or obtained through using specifically designed assessment instruments. There are several instruments from which to choose. Some of these are readily available and can be used free of charge, but others are copyrighted and subject to permission, and possibly a fee. There are several matters to consider

before using assessment instruments, whether they are off-the-shelf or bespoke, including the following:

**Reliability**

A reliable instrument provides consistent results. If the same people complete a perfectly reliable instrument on separate occasions, and if it can be assumed that nothing has changed in the period between, the results should be identical.

**Validity**

A valid instrument is one which measures what it is supposed to measure. If a scale purports to measure social support, scores on that scale ought to relate to things to which one might expect social support to relate. For instance, people with high scores on the social support scale should be less stressed and cope more effectively with risks and adversity in stressful situations. It is important to note that a reliable instrument may not be a valid one. In other words, it may be consistently measuring something other than what it is supposed to measure.

**Standardisation**

A scale might be reliable and valid, but still be of limited use, if it has not been standardised. Standardisation results from testing a measure on a large number of people. The number required varies depending on the complexity, but is usually over 200, and preferably more than 1,000. More cases are needed if responses to a measure are expected to vary by gender, age, social class, cultural background, geographic location, etc., in order to be sure that enough people in each sub-group are included.

**Usability**

To be effective an instrument needs to be usable. For instance, self-complete questionnaires need to be appropriate to the literacy of the proposed informant. If the instrument is used verbally, it is important to be sure that the informant will be comfortable answering questions aloud, and that the instrument lends itself to being presented verbally. The length of the instrument and the time taken to complete it are also important considerations. Longer instruments are more likely to be reliable and valid but will not be usable if participants tend to give up or lose interest in the questions.

**Interpretability**

An instrument will have limited value in the assessment process if assessors are not able to interpret outputs.

**Scariness**

Instruments should not be so intrusive or demanding that they frighten off potential participants.
Language

That instruments need to be in a language understood by the user is an obvious point. Many of the instruments in popular use were developed in North America and, in some cases, the wording of questions may need to be anglicised. Substantial rewording may render information about reliability and validity meaningless.

It is difficult to identify tools that cover the whole process of assessment and enable compilation of a single indicant of risk. There are several which help to identify particular elements of risk, and which might be incorporated into an assessment interview. Others are more appropriately used in population surveys.

Using Instruments

Much assessment in the childcare field depends on professional judgement: assessment guided by the education, experience and intuition of a practitioner. This approach depends on the relationship between a practitioner and the child or family they are assessing, and allows for observation of interactions between a child and his or her family and of the physical environment in which he or she lives. Relying on practitioner wisdom alone is problematic, since there is no way of establishing the reliability or validity of decisions. However, practitioner assessments can be structured and combined with the use of validated instruments. For instance, the Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) Scale (see Annexe 1), which was developed for this purpose and is widely used in the childcare field, leads an assessor through a series of questions about a child’s environment. It is a generic scale, not one used specifically for assessing the risk of offending and/or antisocial behaviour, but it does provide data which might be useful when used in conjunction with other information about a child, and which might identify ways in which the home environment and interactions within the child’s family could be improved.

Some available assessment tools were designed specifically for assessing whether a young person is at risk of becoming involved in criminal and/or antisocial behaviour. The Youth Justice Board recently commissioned the ASSET assessment tool to help practitioners to predict which juvenile offenders are at most risk of reoffending. This tool has been found useful in predicting reoffending, but is not appropriate for use with children and young people who have no criminal record.

The ONSET instrument, designed more recently by the Centre for Criminological Research at the University of Oxford at the request of the Youth Justice Board, aims to identify both risk factors and protective factors, and provides information which might be helpful in selecting appropriate interventions for those identified as needing early intervention irrespective of whether they have yet committed offences or been involved in antisocial behaviour. This instrument is currently being piloted and there is, as yet, no information as to its reliability and validity.

69 Building on Success, Youth Justice Board Review 2001/2002, Youth Justice Board.
Further information and copies of the ONSET forms are available at [http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/PractitionersPortal/Assessment/ONSET.htm](http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/PractitionersPortal/Assessment/ONSET.htm).

The Early Assessment Risk List for Boys (EARL-20B) and the Early Assessment Risk List for Girls (EARL-21G), which were developed at the Earlscourt Child and Family Centre in Toronto, Canada, aim to facilitate professional assessment of the risk of children under 12 engaging in antisocial, aggressive or violent behaviour. Table A2.1 in Annex 2 provides particulars of the kinds of factor that the EARL tools consider. For more information, and details about purchasing the tools, see [http://www.earlscourt.on.ca/RiskAssessmentTools.shtml](http://www.earlscourt.on.ca/RiskAssessmentTools.shtml).

EARL-20B and EARL-21G are intended for use by psychologists and people educated in the causes and treatment of antisocial behaviour in children. They require in-depth involvement of an assessor with the assessed child and their use is inevitably preceded by other modes of selection, usually referral of children who have already demonstrated behavioural problems. Their use is limited to the end-stage of multi-gated assessment procedures (Figure 4.2).

The Trust for the Study of Adolescence recently produced an assessment tool for assessing the need for interventions with parents. The tool which was designed to assist Youth Offending Teams in administering parent support services to the parents of young people who have offended or who are at risk of offending consists of four schedules:

1. Assessment of the need for parenting intervention.
2. Significant factors affecting parenting and family life.
3. Categories of parenting problems.
4. Intervention allocation form.

This assessment tool aims to guide Youth Offending Teams with regard to the circumstances in which a parenting intervention would be appropriate from a criminal justice perspective and to help in them identify individual parents’ support requirements. It is available from the Trust for the Study of Adolescence (see contact details in Annex 5) or may be downloaded from [http://www.tsa.uk.com/yot_parenting](http://www.tsa.uk.com/yot_parenting).

The Rickter Scale developed at Heriot Watt University provides a non-paper-based assessment tool designed to help practitioners to engage clients in self-assessment. It uses a plastic board with a framework of sliders that can be positioned at various scale-points, and can enable young people to explore their circumstances and identify priorities for support and intervention. Further information is available at: [http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/ilsn-21.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/ilsn-21.asp).

Instruments such as those described above help practitioners to assess individual children or families. They do, however, require some degree of professional judgement, and should only be used by practitioners who have been appropriately trained.
It is important to use instruments that are appropriate to the assessment circumstances. The age of the child is particularly important, especially when questionnaires are used. It may be necessary to seek information from the child, but in the case of younger children the primary data sources will inevitably be parents or other adults, such as schoolteachers, who have regular contact with the child.

It is also important to see assessment as a continuing process. The circumstances of young people and the way that they manage them are likely to change over time. Thus, circumstances that seem to constitute risk at one point in a young person’s life may, at other times, have no effect or even help them to develop resilience. Particular care is required in interpreting outputs from the assessment of young people from ethnic minorities or traveller families. It should not be assumed that assessment instruments that have been tested with one population are appropriate for use with others.
6. Assessing Community-based Risk

The Community Context

Children are inevitably affected by the characteristics of the areas in which they live their daily lives, and by the broader community. In this sense, the community context is best seen as a series of nested structures or systems, as follows:

- **The microsystem**: consisting of the immediate environment in which the child is physically present (home, school, neighbourhood)
- **The mesosystem**: consisting of interactions and connections between microsystem settings (e.g. relationships between parents and their children’s school)
- **The exosystem**: consisting of settings in the wider society where the young person is generally not physically present (e.g. parent’s workplace, local government and community service agencies)
- **The macrosystem**: consisting of the values, laws and customs of the local, national and international communities

Assessment of risk (and resilience) at the community level usually involves secondary analysis of publicly available data, which is occasionally backed up by evidence drawn from community surveys. Various data are available via the Office of National Statistics, while the annual audits compiled by Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships provide useful statistics about crime and disorder within each local authority.

For data to be useful in deciding which areas have highest levels of risk, they need to be available for small areas, but only a limited amount of data is available for a geographic area that is smaller than the local authority. Much published data, therefore, has limited value in neighbourhood level assessment. A community, or neighbourhood, may be difficult to define, but for assessment purposes it is desirable to have data for areas at least as small as a local government ward. For a catalogue of what is available on line, and the geographic area covered, see the ONS website at http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

A comprehensive review of statistics produced by government is available at http://www.local.dtlr.gov.uk/datacata. We recommend that this be read and the various caveats therein be noted before any of the small-area indicators referred to in this manual are used.

Community assessment might be carried out with the purpose of targeting communities, or for contributing to the assessment of risk factors affecting an individual child. The former purpose is becoming commonplace as the Government establishes a range of initiatives aimed at tackling problems of social exclusion by narrowing the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the country, lowering long-term unemployment and crime rates, and achieving better health and education. Statistics relating to small areas are vital for this purpose, in
that they enable identification of the areas most in need of action. A report published in April 2000 by the Social Exclusion Unit, identified 22 government initiatives that were allocated on the basis of information derived from small area statistics. However, since the information available at neighbourhood levels is limited, reliable targeting is likely to depend on community surveys that aim to identify the prevalence of particular risk factors. Annexe 3 identifies some issues that might be explored through a community survey.

The Sense of Community Scale (see Annexe 1) is a simple instrument that can be employed in community surveys in order to measure the extent to which people feel a sense of community in the neighbourhood in which they live. Some suggestions about data sources relating to some specific community-based risk factors are given below.

In the absence of data to measure some risk factors, data proxies that are likely to correlate with the real factor that they represent are often employed. For instance, voter turnout in local and national elections might replace the community risk factor ‘neighbourhood attachment’, the assumption being that the people who fail to vote do not feel attached to their neighbourhood.

Appropriate assessment of the neighbourhood is important, even after specific neighbourhoods have been targeted, in order to provide data for strategic decision-making and to stimulate local awareness. The main purpose of community assessment at this stage is to understand the circumstances in which initiatives will take place. When conducting such assessment, it is important to draw on the knowledge of local residents.

Community Risk Factors

Demographics

Youth crime tends to be high in the most deprived areas, which contain higher proportions of lone-parent families, low-earning households and poor housing, and which suffer from higher levels of unemployment, especially among young men, than other areas. This is not to say that any of these factors are themselves causes of or explanations for crime. Some possible data sources relating to area demographics are shown in Table 6.1.
Table 6.1  Neighbourhood demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Smallest Area Covered</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children in lone-parent households</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Census output area</td>
<td>Decennial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity: residents in ethnic groups other than white</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Census output area</td>
<td>Decennial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic status</td>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Census output area</td>
<td>Decennial</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: There are some 175,434 Output Areas in England and Wales. Some 37.5% lie between 120 and 129 households, whilst 79.6% lie between 110 and 139 households. Some 5% lie between 40 households - the confidentiality threshold - and 99 households.

Crime

In areas which are characterised by high levels of crime and/or antisocial behaviour, it is likely that children will develop similar attitudes and behaviours to those of the adults in their community. Children who live in such areas experience higher levels of risk than those brought up in communities with little experience of crime. Table 6.2 shows appropriate data sources.

Table 6.2  Community crime indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Smallest Area Covered</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Notifiable offences: total crimes reported to police forces (including breakdown by selected offences)</td>
<td>Home Office</td>
<td>Basic Command Unit</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data on recorded crime tend to be available only at the level of police basic command units (BCUs), which are the most basic operational units for the delivery of local policing. There are more than 300 BCUs in England and Wales, and they vary in size from over 1,000 police officers to little over 100. Some serve densely populated inner-city areas while others cover vast tracts of sparsely populated countryside. BCUs generally cover much larger areas than an electoral ward.

Some care is required when interpreting crime rates, owing to significant differences in types of BCU. For instance, the Newcastle Central BCU has one of the highest rates of offences per 1,000 households in the UK, but it covers the city centre, which has a small resident population, and which contains most of the shops in the city and is the focus of the city’s night-life, sources of much of the crime-related activity.

Public perceptions about crime may have more impact on attitudes and behaviours than recorded crimes. It is therefore important to conduct community surveys that aim to gather information about people’s experience of crime, and about fear of crime.
Several national surveys cover these issues, but they are not sufficiently large to provide reliable information about small areas.

**Community norms favourable to crime**

Prevailing norms of behaviours that are acceptable within a particular community are communicated in various ways: through laws or written policies, through informal social practices, and through the expectations that parents and other members of the community have of young people. When community standards are favourable towards particular behaviours, children and young people are more likely to indulge in them. Thus, if community attitudes are tolerant of crime children are at greater risk of growing up delinquent.

No consistent information is available about community norms, and this is an issue that is best addressed through specifically targeted community surveys and/or focus groups.

**Transitions and mobility**

Even normal transitions, such as changing schools, can increase problem behaviours. When communities are characterised by frequent non-scheduled transitions, children are at higher risk of involvement in crime or antisocial behaviour. Communities with high rates of residential mobility appear to have higher than normal rates of crime. The more often people in a particular area move, the greater the risk of criminal or antisocial behaviour. Children who experience frequent residential moves and stressful life transitions tend to have a higher risk of school failure, delinquency and substance abuse. Higher rates of youth crime occur in neighbourhoods in which people have little sense of community attachment, where rates of vandalism are high and where there is little surveillance of public places.

The less homogeneous a community is in terms of race, class and religion, the less attached its residents may feel to the overall community and the more difficult it is to establish clear community goals and identity. One of the key factors is whether residents feel able to make a difference to their lives.

If the key players in a neighbourhood, such as police, schoolteachers, youth workers and social workers, live outside of a community, those who live in it tend to have less sense of commitment to the area. Lower rates of voter participation and parental involvement in schools, and high support for extremist political parties, also indicate lower attachment to the community.

In some areas, the electoral register is used to estimate residential mobility. It is worth enquiring whether a local authority logs new registrations and makes the data available in a format that facilitates comparisons between areas.

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73 Youth Justice Board (2001) *Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Youth Crime and Effective Interventions to Prevent It.*
Economic deprivation

The effects of poverty and multiple disadvantages, such as poor housing and unequal access to acceptable educational and leisure opportunities, place some families at risk of social exclusion. Many socially-excluded children can become involved in offending and antisocial behaviour very early in their lives and the positive or negative experiences they have around the age of 12 can have a long-lasting impact on their later life chances.74

The main indicator of deprivation used in England and Wales is the Index of Local Deprivation,75 which uses data on income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education, skills and training, housing and geographical access to services to produce a scale score that can be used to compare levels of neighbourhood deprivation. There are separate indices for each of six domains, and a separate Child Poverty Index.

In December 2003, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions published a document which set out the criteria to be used from 2004/05 for assessing programmes in eradicating child poverty. It consists of a tiered approach which measures absolute low income; relative low income; and material deprivation and low income combined. Using this approach poverty will be adjudged to be falling when all three indicators are moving in the right direction.76

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.3 Deprivation indicators</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Smallest Area Covered</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Index of local deprivation</td>
<td>DTLR</td>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Approximately 3 – 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Support claimants</td>
<td>DWP: Social Security Statistics</td>
<td>Postcode, ward,</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Seekers Allowance claimants</td>
<td>DWP Social Security Statistics</td>
<td>Postcode, ward,</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free school meals</td>
<td>DfES</td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term unemployment: The number of claimants at Employment Service local offices who have been unemployed for more than a year</td>
<td>Employment Service</td>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young male unemployment: number of unemployment-related benefit claimants who were male and aged under 25</td>
<td>NOMIS: UK Labour Market Statistics</td>
<td>Ward</td>
<td>Quarterly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

75 See http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk
See Table 6.3 for other data sources, but note that for some indicators numbers are provided rather than rates. To make sense of these the data need to be transformed into rates that allow comparison between areas. For instance, the number of unemployed people under 25 could be transformed into a percentage of people under 25 in each area who are unemployed.

The Family Resource Scale (see Annexe 1) is a useful tool for measuring resources available to individual families. It includes some questions about financial resources but also considers resources such as time, energy and social support.

The Family Economic Strain Scale (see Annexe 1) measures how some families experience economic strain.

**Community Protective Factors**

While children might be adversely affected by characteristics of the communities in which they live, these communities might also provide them with the protective factors that create resilience to risk.

An important part of community well-being is the ability of the community to cope with stresses through:

- social support networks which may help families through difficult circumstances
- community awareness of community problems or weaknesses, and community involvement in addressing the issues
- ability to adapt to changed circumstances

The potential of communities to protect and support individuals is a particular concern in the study of social capital, which has been described as ‘features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit’.78


The General Household Survey 2000 included, for the first time, questions that specifically aimed to measure elements of social capital. National Statistics are currently developing and testing questions to measure social capital specifically among young people, with results expected towards the end of 2004. There is a

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useful literature review at:

Positive involvement

Providing children with rewards for positive participation in activities helps them to bond with their community, thus lowering the risk of them engaging in antisocial activities. Formal systems for acknowledging the positive contribution that children make to their community help young people to feel appreciated.

When opportunities are available within the community for positive participation, children are less likely to engage in problem behaviours. It is therefore important to log the facilities that are available, for example, youth organisations, parks, community centres, churches and organised sports.

Community controls

Although they are not strictly protective factors as these are understood in the discourse of risk and resilience, community controls such as policing, neighbourhood watch, neighbourhood wardens, CCTV, etc. do serve to reduce opportunities for people to engage in crime or antisocial behaviour. Community audits ought to log and monitor the existence of factors that might serve to control crime levels.

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7. Assessing School-based Risk

Targeting Schools

Children spend a significant amount of their lives in school, and their educational attainment is an important determinant of their future life-chances. Early and persistent antisocial behaviour, academic failure in primary school and a low degree of commitment to school are risk factors in the school domain that are predictors of delinquent adolescent behaviour. It could be schools or individual pupils that are subjected to assessment. In the latter case, factors from the school domain become part of the child’s personal profile.

Targeting schools is likely to be more cost-effective than attempting to engage in in-depth assessment of individual children. In many ways, the school is the ideal site for gathering information about children. Schools are located in neighbourhoods – although some of them may have wide catchment areas – while most children have a teacher who is in regular contact with them and able to assess their behaviour, which is the most significant predictor of their future involvement in crime and/or antisocial behaviour.

Safer Schools Partnerships, which are a joint initiative between the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the Youth Justice Board and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) have placed police officers in schools in areas with high levels of street crime. It is intended that police officers will work with school staff and other local agencies to:

- reduce victimisation, criminality and antisocial behaviour within the school and its community
- work with schools on ‘whole school’ approaches to behaviour and discipline
- identify and work with children and young people at risk of becoming victims or offenders
- ensure the full-time education of young offenders
- support vulnerable children and young people through periods of transition, such as the move from primary to secondary school
- create a safer environment for children to learn in

Assessment of risk is an important element of strategies that aim to make schools as safe and risk-free as possible. Indeed, it has been suggested that

schools and agencies working together can prevent dangerous problematic behaviour, reducing human tragedies and the long-term costs of crime. The first step is a caring school responsive to all students.\(^\text{81}\)

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\(^{81}\) Dwyer, K., A Safe School Checklist; [http://www.veaweteach.org/safesch.html](http://www.veaweteach.org/safesch.html)
Guidelines for Safer School Partnerships can be found on: http://www.cypu.gov.uk/corporate/search-cypu.cfm

For general guidance on creating a safe school environment, see Annexe 4.

**School Risk Factors**

**Readiness for school**

It is now accepted that children’s readiness to learn when they start formal education is a crucial determinant of their future achievement and behaviour. The Centre for Studies of Children at Risk, based in Ontario, Canada, has developed the *Early Development Instrument (EDI)* (see Annexe 1), which is completed by schoolteachers during the first year of formal education in order to assess children’s readiness to learn at school. This instrument provides outputs that can help communities to look backward to adjust early childhood programmes in order to support early development more effectively and ensure that as many children as possible are ready to learn. It can also help schools to look forward to adjust school programmes in order to meet the needs of current pupils. Although each individual child is assessed, EDI outputs focus on groups – classes, schools, neighbourhoods, etc. – in order to avoid labelling individual children before they embark on their academic careers.

It is important to continue monitoring child behaviour during their early schooling. The *Behaviour Checklist for Primary Schools* can be used to analyse individual pupils’ behaviour, identify the circumstances associated with disruptive behaviour and formulate an individual educational programme. The checklist looks at various classes of behaviour, including:

- academic behaviour
- behaviours concerned with rules and routines
- verbal/noisy behaviour
- aggression towards pupils
- aggression towards teachers
- social and emotional behaviours

**Early and persistent antisocial behaviour**

Boys who display aggressive behaviour at the time they start school are at greater risk of becoming involved in crime and antisocial behaviour, although evidence as to whether aggressive behaviour in very early childhood is associated with risk is

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82 McNamara, E. *Behaviour Checklist for Primary Schools*. Available from: http://www.incentiveplus.co.uk/Frames/Main.htm, price £38.50.
inconclusive. When an aggressive six-year-old also demonstrates isolation or withdrawal there is an even greater risk of problems in adolescence.\(^8^3\)

This risk factor also includes antisocial behaviour in early adolescence, such as misbehaving in school, truancy, and getting into fights with other children. Early behaviour is the most powerful predictor of later antisocial and criminal behaviour. Consequently, it is important to monitor children’s behaviour on a regular basis, so as to be able to take early preventative action.

In England and Wales, some 13,000 children a year are permanently excluded from school, and a further 150,000 temporarily excluded.\(^8^4\) An Audit Commission study found that some 42 per cent of young offenders had been excluded from school suggesting a link between exclusion and offending albeit not necessarily a causal one.\(^8^5\)

One approach to school-based assessment which informs decisions about targeting is to monitor behaviour at the school level and draw comparisons between education authorities by examining data on school exclusions (Table 7.1).

### Table 7.1  Antisocial behaviour indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Smallest Area Covered</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School exclusions: permanent exclusions of school pupils</td>
<td>DfES</td>
<td>LEA, estimates for LAs</td>
<td>Annual</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire* (see Annexe 1) might be used to obtain information about the antisocial behaviour of individual children. It is completed by a child’s main carer, and focuses on a child’s emotional and behavioural strengths as well as their difficulties. There is also a version of the questionnaire designed for young people to complete.

The *Boxall Profile* might help teachers to understand children’s emotional and behavioural difficulties and plan effective interventions and support activities.\(^8^6\)

**Early academic failure**

There can be many reasons why children do not do well at school. Failure may not correlate with ability, but experience of failure increases the risk of problem behaviours. Schools can readily identify this risk factor through regular monitoring of performance. The *Early Development Instrument* (see Annexe 1) measures the readiness of a child to learn and provides an early indicator of which schools need additional resources.

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The performance of individual schools can be monitored through SAT (Standard Attainment Test) scores which are derived from testing children’s educational attainment at ages 7, 9 and 11 (Table 7.2).

Table 7.2 Educational attainment indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Smallest area covered</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor primary-school performance: Children with SAT scores &lt; level 4 at Key Stage 2</td>
<td>DfES Schools</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lack of commitment to school

Low commitment to school means that a young person no longer sees education as useful. Their lack of interest in school means that they are at increased risk of becoming involved in problem behaviours, including crime, antisocial behaviour and substance abuse.

Some children demonstrate lack of commitment to school by their absence, and the rates of this can be monitored for each school through published data about authorised and unauthorised absences (Table 7.3).

Table 7.3 School commitment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Smallest Area Covered</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authorised and unauthorised absences from school</td>
<td>DfES Schools</td>
<td>Annual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The commitment of children to school is very much influenced by the support their parents give. Parental support can be assessed via the Inventory of Parental Influence (see Annexe 1).

School Protective Factors

Attachment to school

Research has shown that schools have the potential for tipping the scale from risk to resilience through development of caring relationships, by teachers having positive and high expectations of young people and providing opportunities for them to participate and contribute.

Young people are more likely to feel attached to school if they feel able to participate meaningfully in important school activities. If they feel positively involved, they are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour. It is important that young people feel rewarded for the effort they put into their school work and other related activities.
Teachers can provide support by listening to students, letting them know that their feelings matter and by demonstrating, kindness, compassion and respect.\textsuperscript{87}

\textsuperscript{87} Benard, B (undated) \textit{Turning it Around for all Youth: From risk to resilience}, http://www.resilnet.uiuc.edu/library/dig126.html
8. Assessing Family-based Risk

The influence of family is an important factor in child development. Family management problems, family conflict, family history of high-risk behaviours and inappropriate modelling behaviours such as parental involvement in criminal activities, drug abuse or heavy drinking may all be associated with delinquent and antisocial behaviour among children. Although the family is a major source of protection, certain kinds of family circumstances are associated with increased risk. Thus, assessment of family structures and relationships is a central element of the assessment of a child. This assessment could be carried out via a child-focused questionnaire that aims to explore the child’s perceptions of their family. This is not possible for younger children, and another family member will become the primary informant. In some cases, such as when parental attitudes and/or behaviours are of interest, parents may be the most appropriate informants. Before proceeding with assessment, the following issues should be considered:

- Which family members need to be involved?
- What will be required of them?
- How often will they need to be seen?
- Where will they be seen?
- What measures or instruments will be used?
- When will these instruments be completed?
- Is there anyone else who might hold critical information about the family?
- Are there any agency reports available about the family (e.g. social services, schools)?
- How will the information be analysed?
- How will results be fed back to the families concerned?

When involving other family members in assessment of a child, it is important to:

- make the purpose of the assessment clear
- attempt to establish rapport with participants
- be sensitive to family concerns
- start with simple questions and then probe for more in-depth information
- repeat a summary of what has been said to make sure responses have been understood correctly
- be aware of cultural issues
With regard to cultural appropriateness, the following points are important:

1. Pre-set questions may not always be suitable or relevant when there are problems of communication or different cultural values at play. Being responsive and flexible during an assessment is essential in these circumstances. Specialised terminology should be avoided.

2. Some families may rely on non-verbal cues and social hierarchies to communicate, while others concentrate on verbal messages. For instance, some Asian families may smile and nod in response to a question, but may be indicating respect rather than agreement.

3. Some tools require a certain literacy level and/or command of the English language. It is important to have questionnaires available in multiple languages. If interviews are to be used, an interpreter may be required.

4. Families differ enormously from each other, even when they share the same cultural norms and values. It is necessary to be aware of the boundaries of what is construed as normal within the context of a particular cultural group.

5. Practitioners need to understand their own cultural perspectives, and know how these relate to others.

Cultural norms in families and communities may affect how willing they are to take part in the assessment process and provide information. When working with families it is necessary to consider whether:

- it is considered acceptable to discuss family matters with someone outside the family
- there is a family or community ‘gatekeeper’ through whom contact should be negotiated
- families have sufficient grasp of the English language to allow confidence in the responses

Assessing families is almost always an intrusive activity. If the process is not treated with sufficient sensitivity the assessment process might discourage families from becoming involved in interventions.

**Family Risk Factors**

**Family history of criminal or antisocial behaviour**

The *Youth Lifestyles Survey* demonstrated a link, particularly for females, between offending behaviour and having friends and family members who are involved in

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offending. In studies carried out by the Princes Trust\textsuperscript{89} and the Trust for the Study of Adolescence,\textsuperscript{90} a large proportion of the offenders had had family members and friends involved in criminal activity, and there is evidence that this had directly influenced the young people's behaviour. The Federation of Prisoners' Families Support Groups estimated that some 5 per cent of the school population have experienced the imprisonment of their father before they leave school (about half a million children).

Children whose parents drink heavily can suffer from a range of adverse outcomes such as displays of antisocial behaviour and difficulties at school.\textsuperscript{91} Substance misuse interacts with other factors, possibly drawing family members into crime, or impairing the ability to parent effectively and to give children the supervision they need.\textsuperscript{92}

Questioning families about their involvement in illegal activities can be extremely intrusive. Nevertheless, it may be important to identify families in which this risk factor is present through information provided by the police, probation services and social services, but assessors will need to consider whether it is ethical to obtain such information without the permission of families.

Family management problems

Poor family management practices include the failure of parents to monitor children (knowing where they are and who they are with), excessively severe or inconsistent punishment, and parents having unclear expectations about behaviour. Subjecting children to adult supervision at key points during the day, for example at breakfast, when coming home from school and at bedtime could prove effective in reducing risk.\textsuperscript{93}

Lack of parental supervision is a risk factor for future offending, particularly in view of the fact that it can lead to a chain of events, including truancy, drug taking, and other antisocial activity. Wilson’s study of 595 children aged 10 to 17 found that rates of delinquency were high in homes where parental supervision was lax, and more common where one parent had a criminal record.\textsuperscript{94} More recently, a study of younger children confirmed Wilson’s findings, but went on to state that association with delinquent peers became an important risk factor as children got older.\textsuperscript{95} The Youth Lifestyles Survey of 1998–99 found that those children who were most likely to be

\begin{footnotes}
\item[95] Riley, D. and Shaw, M. (1985) \textit{Parental Supervision and Juvenile Delinquency}, Home Office Research Study No. 83.
\end{footnotes}
classed as persistent offenders were those who had been poorly supervised and who seemed to have a weak attachment to their family.  

Several instruments have been designed for measuring family functioning, including the *Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment Scale* (see Annexe 1), which is designed to be used by practitioners. The *Family Assessment Device* (see Annexe 1) can be completed by parents.

**Family conflict**

Persistent, serious conflict between parents and between a parent and a child appears to increase risk for children brought up in those families. Conflict within families appears to be more important, in this respect, than family structure. Whether two parents or a single parent head the family, children raised in families with high conflict appear to be at risk of problem behaviour. Nevertheless, several research studies have found higher levels of antisocial behaviour and delinquency in children from separated families than in children from intact families.

**Family Protective Factors**

**Participation in family activities**

Although research suggests that adult supervision is more significant than joint participation in activities, young people who spend time doing things with their parents are protected from risk to some extent. The degree to which families participate in joint activities can be measured through the *Family Activity Scale* (see Annexe 1).

**Family attachment**

Young people who feel that they are valued members of their family are less likely to engage in problem behaviours. The *Parent–Child Closeness Scale* (see Annexe 1) is a useful and simple indicator.

**Parental encouragement**

When parents, siblings and other family members praise and encourage children, and attend positive activities in which children participate, children are less likely to engage in problem behaviours. Parental encouragement can be measured through the *Parental Motivational Practices Scale* (see Annexe 1).

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Parental monitoring

High levels of parental monitoring, defined as the knowledge parents have in respect of their child’s whereabouts, activities and friends, are associated with greater academic achievement, and lower levels of depression, antisocial and criminal behaviour and sexual behaviour. Parental monitoring does not mean that parents have to have a constant physical presence. Consistent, firm control and monitoring can be conducted from a distance.

The Parental Monitoring Scale (see Annexe 1) is an easy-to-use instrument that assesses parents’ awareness of their child’s whereabouts, friendships and activities during their free time.


Community-focused assessment (Section 6) helps to identify residential areas in which large numbers of children are at risk of developing problem behaviours. School-focused assessment (Section 7) helps to identify schools in which a large number of students are at risk. Both these levels of assessment, and assessment which focuses on families (Section 8), help in the process of developing comprehensive information that provides rounded pictures of individual children. The school a child attends, the community in which they live and the family in which they are raised all have an important influence on their development. Figure 9.1 illustrates the various sources of information that might feed into an assessment process that has the assessment of an individual child at its centre.

One possible way of identifying which young people are at risk is through the use of social surveys, which ought to cover the following topics:

- experience of transitions and mobility
- neighbourhood attachment
- the existence of rewards and opportunities for positive involvement at school and in the community
- commitment to school
- family history of criminal or antisocial behaviour
- family management problems
- family conflict
- parental attitudes towards antisocial behaviour
- family attachment
- opportunities for positive involvement in family activities
- rebelliousness
- interaction with antisocial peers
- the young person’s attitudes towards crime and antisocial behaviour
- religious beliefs and practices

The end objective of a multiple-gating approach to assessment (Figure 4.1, p. 35) is the assessment of children. This involves taking their circumstances and needs into consideration with a view to deciding on whether to include them in programmes and determining what interventions are appropriate. Although background factors from the community, school and family domains are important they cannot themselves explain why some children get involved in criminal or antisocial behaviour while others with similar background characteristics do not. Individual factors continue to
be crucial in determining which children will participate in delinquent or antisocial behaviour.

It is crucial to obtain parental cooperation and the consent of the child if individual children are being assessed. Once this is obtained, information gathering is likely to involve interviewing the child, observing the child’s behaviour and, if appropriate, completing assessment instruments. Some instruments are specifically designed for children to complete but self-complete questionnaires are of little use when assessing younger children, excepting those which can be completed by someone else (e.g. parents or teachers).

Figure 9.1   Possible information pathways in child assessment
Good communication is essential for eliciting the participation of children. Thomas and Beckford\textsuperscript{99} give the following tips for establishing effective communication with children:

- express things clearly
- use concepts, ideas and examples that are familiar to children
- explain ideas simply at the child’s level of understanding
- allow for the effects of emotional distress on levels of understanding
- offer reassurance and allow opportunities for children to ask questions

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**Individual Risk Factors**

**Alienation/rebelliousness**

Young people who feel that they are not part of society and not bound by rules, who do not believe in trying to be successful or responsible, or who take an active rebellious stance towards society are at higher risk of delinquency, antisocial behaviour and substance abuse.\textsuperscript{100}

**Friends who engage in crime and antisocial behaviour**

Young people who associate with peers who engage in crime and antisocial behaviour are much more likely to become involved in the same behaviour themselves. Even when a young person comes from a stable family background and does not experience other risk factors, associating with peers who engage in problem behaviour greatly increases the risk that the young person will become involved in the same behaviour. However, young people who are at low risk in other ways are less likely to spend time with friends who are involved in antisocial behaviour.


\textsuperscript{100} Youth Justice Board (2001) Risk and Protective Factors Associated with Youth Crime and Effective Interventions to Prevent it.
Favourable attitudes toward crime and antisocial behaviour

Very young children tend to express anti-crime, anti-drug and pro-social attitudes. They have difficulty imagining why people use drugs, commit crimes and truant from school. As they get older, and as others whom they know become involved in such behaviours, their attitude often shifts towards one of greater acceptance of these behaviours. This acceptance places them at higher risk.

Biological factors

The propensity of young people to offend might have a biological or physiological basis. Such factors might be a cause of behaviours such as sensation-seeking, low harm avoidance and lack of impulse control, and their presence appears to increase the risk of young people engaging in delinquent behaviour. Attention Deficit Disorder has been identified as one significant risk factor. 101

There are various instruments available that aim to measure attention-deficit hyperactivity. A selection of these can be found at: http://www.neurotransmitter.net/adhdscales.html

Such instruments are not a substitute for medical diagnosis. Mental health problems should not be diagnosed or treated without consultation with qualified health or mental health practitioners

Some research points to a relationship between the development of problem behaviours and the presence of toxic substances in children’s bodies. Children with a high exposure to lead tend to be more distracted, hyperactive and impulsive and to have difficulty following simple instructions. 102

Individual Protective Factors

Religious beliefs and practices

Young people who regularly attend religious services are less likely to engage in antisocial behaviour.

Social skills

Young people who are socially competent and engage in positive interpersonal relationships with their peers are less likely to engage in problem behaviours. The Adolescent Coping Scale (see Annexe 1) can be used with children over 12. Its focus is on psychological well-being and adaptive strategies for coping.

10. Intervening to Reduce Risk

This section explains how a risk-based approach to targeting relates to the provision of interventions that aim to reduce the likelihood of children engaging in antisocial or offending behaviour, and Table 10.1 identifies some of the ways in which intervention can help.

Table 10.1  How intervention can help at different levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention can help to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• enhance family functioning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• improve parenting skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provide support to new parents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provide good quality childcare</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• provide high quality pre-school provision</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• promote health</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• prevent family breakdown</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• raise the living standards of families</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• protect children</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• increase parent’s self-confidence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention can help to:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• increase employment opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• facilitate regeneration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provide community facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• strengthen and support community networks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• support volunteering</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• harness the strengths of faith communities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• encourage community self-help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• facilitate improved mental health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provide increased sport and leisure facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Individual child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention can help to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• enable preparation for family life and parenthood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• encourage parental involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• combat truancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• assist excluded children and their families</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• tackle bullying</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• encourage engagement with school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• provide opportunities for success</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention can help to:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• build confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• enhance problem-solving skills</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• develop coping behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• encourage positive attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• increase commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• improve self-esteem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Targeting Interventions

There are three main types of targeting for crime reduction strategies.103

1. Primary – focusing on the general population of potential offenders.

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2. **Secondary** – focusing on people at particular risk of offending.

3. **Tertiary** – focusing on those already convicted of or involved in criminal activity.

Primary targeting would provide universal interventions with a general aim of improving the quality of life for all children in the hope that this would lead to fewer of them becoming involved in criminal or antisocial activities. However, universal programmes can be expensive to run and may not be needed by many of the children who become involved in them. Secondary targeting offers the potential for increased cost effectiveness if the population that is ‘at risk’ can be accurately defined. Tertiary targeting may be more valid, since it focuses on those who have already engaged in the predicted behaviour. However, tertiary intervention may be too late to divert people from serious or persistent offending.

This manual focuses primarily on secondary targeting, action which follows assessment of risk. It aims to assist those planning and delivering crime reduction initiatives to target their interventions on those children and families who are most likely to benefit from them. It is intended to be used by practitioners who are developing their own targeting strategies, which are likely to differ according to the circumstances of service delivery and the characteristics of the young people involved. It is not possible to provide a tailor-made assessment tool that will suit all circumstances and all requirements. It is intended that the manual will be a practical resource which can be referred to in order to make informed decisions about providing appropriate initiatives that reach the right children, families and neighbourhoods. By identifying those children most at risk of offending, and providing early, developmentally appropriate and multiple interventions, the strengths that these children possess can be enhanced, and their levels of risk reduced, in order to encourage positive outcomes.

Research suggests that the most encouraging results occur when a prevention programme has many elements, is intensive, and targets young children who are severely disadvantaged. One of the keys to success, therefore, is the establishment of appropriate criteria which indicate who these severely disadvantaged children are.

Although, historically, it has been very difficult to evaluate the impact of different interventions, a body of research now suggests that certain interventions are better than others at addressing specific risk factors. It is therefore particularly important to consider which interventions might be most appropriate in reducing or ameliorating the specific factors that are salient in the life of the child and family. Many interventions specifically intended to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour tend to target families. Research suggests that the most promising strategies for reducing the risks of young people becoming involved in crime include frequent home visiting by practitioners during pregnancy and childhood.\(^{104}\) However, it must be noted that families often have wider support networks that can be utilised. Grandparents, in particular, have an important role to play.

Table 10.2 gives a very general indication of the types of intervention that may be appropriate where particular risk factors have been identified. Table 10.3 indicates the kind of preventative factors that such interventions might enhance. It should be

noted, however, that evidence as to whether these interventions work is limited. For more information about this, see the following:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk factor</th>
<th>Home visiting</th>
<th>Pre-school education</th>
<th>Parent support and training</th>
<th>Family therapy</th>
<th>Home–school partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor housing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor parental supervision</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent discipline</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of rules about behaviour</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family conflict</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family transitions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental involvement in education</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor academic performance</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child disaffected from school</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child excluded from school</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child behavioural problems</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antisocial peers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental criminality</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child involved in poor behaviour/offending</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental drug/alcohol use</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 10.2 Interventions and the specific risk factors they *might* address
Table 10.3 Interventions and the protective factors they can enhance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protective factors</th>
<th>Home visiting</th>
<th>Pre-school education</th>
<th>Parent support and training</th>
<th>Family therapy</th>
<th>Home–school partnerships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good parental supervision</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Low family conflict</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear rules</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational success</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children valued at school</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive temperament</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-social experiences</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-social peers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment to school</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Involving families

It is important to involve families and children in decisions about interventions. Parents and children need to know what is happening and have the opportunity to contribute their own ideas and perspectives. Consideration needs to be given to ways in which family members can be encouraged to participate fully with practitioners, while they need to be assured that their wishes and feelings will be given due consideration. Children can participate at various levels:

1. **Being informed** – children can be kept informed about what is happening, and what the information practitioners obtain will be used for.

2. **Expressing their views** – children can be encouraged to put forward their perspectives on, and opinions of, aspects of the process and describe how they see themselves and their families.

3. **Being involved in decision making** – children can help to influence the decisions that are made by offering their opinions about the type of intervention that could help.

The extent to which children are involved will depend in part on their age and stage of development. The main consideration at all times is good communication between adult and child so as to elicit the most effective participation from children. Most parents are able to cope with the stresses and strains associated with raising children without help, other than that provided by their own informal networks. Some parents, however, need and want extra support. Keeping family members informed about what is going on encourages their participation but some parents may be

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106 Responses to the ‘Supporting Families’ consultation carried out by the Lord Chancellor’s Department.
unwilling to take part. Some may feel embarrassed about problems they are having or about their inability to cope while others may feel that they are being singled out and stigmatised or have language or literacy difficulties. Some families will be hard-to-reach, including those that fall into one of the following categories:

- Traditionally under-represented groups, the marginalised, disadvantaged or socially excluded
- Those currently slipping through the net, the overlooked, invisible or inarticulate
- The service resistant, those unwilling to engage with service providers, the suspicious, the over targeted or disaffected

Lack of trust or confidence and a sense of powerlessness can all contribute to reluctance to accept help. Several strategies can be employed to gain parents’ cooperation, including the following:

1. Ensuring that parents are kept fully informed about why their children are being targeted and about what activities they will be involved in.
2. Developing links with trusted agencies or individuals already involved with the family (e.g. teachers and health visitors).
3. Taking time to build up relationships without pressuring parents to take part.
4. Being sensitive to particular cultural or physical barriers, such as language difficulties or disabilities.

**Auditing Provision of Initiatives**

When planning interventions it is important to have at one’s disposal an up-to-date audit of the various services already provided in the area by the local authority, voluntary agencies and the private sector. This may suggest services that can be utilised, and help to avoid duplication. Most local authorities have active websites which are a good source of information about what is going on in their area; a link to all local authorities’ websites can be found at [http://www.ukonline.gov.uk](http://www.ukonline.gov.uk)

There is currently a strong emphasis on Area Based Initiatives, that is, government programmes which concentrate on tackling problems in specific geographic areas. Rather than being provided uniformly throughout the country, these programmes target particular areas of need. Information about which initiatives are active in any area can be found at [http://www.rcu.gov.uk](http://www.rcu.gov.uk)


Concluding Comments

In this final section, we have referred to a number of interventions which might address the risk factors discussed in previous sections. We have refrained from making recommendations about which interventions are effective, but the annexes which follow list a range of instruments which practitioners may wish to consider in deciding which risk and protective factors interventions ought to address. The primary objective of this reference manual is to assist policymakers and practitioners in the identification of families with children at risk of becoming involved in criminal and antisocial behaviour and to facilitate appropriate and effective targeting of interventions. It is not an assessment tool in itself, but we have suggested instruments which may be helpful. Importantly, we have reviewed the existing evidence relating to risk and resilience and described the processes involved in undertaking assessments. The manual offers a point of reference which might be used in conjunction with a common assessment framework. It is important to remember that risk and protective factors change over time, and any assessment must take this into account. Assessing children is not an exact science and needs to be undertaken carefully and cautiously while the targeted children and their families should be actively involved in both assessment and intervention processes.
Annexe 1

Some Instruments that Aim to Assess Elements of Risk and Resilience

This annexe provides basic information about some of the assessment instruments referred to in the text. For each of these instruments information is provided about its purpose, who it should be completed by, where to get further information and assessment of reliability, validity, standardisation, usability, interpretation and scariness (for an explanation of these terms, see pp. 44–5).

Each of these instruments should be used with care by appropriately-trained practitioners. High scores on any of them do not necessarily indicate that a child or young person is likely to engage in criminal or antisocial behaviour.

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<td>11. Parental Motivational Practices Scale</td>
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<td>12. Sense of Community Scale</td>
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<td>13. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1. Adolescent Coping Scale

What it measures
Assesses coping strategies among adolescents. There are thirteen subscales:

1. Proactive orientation
2. Avoiding problems
3. Externalising feelings
4. Social activities
5. Family interaction
6. Seeking spiritual support
7. Physical diversions
8. Passive diversions
9. Catharsis
10. Being humorous
11. Seeking professional support
12. Positive imagery
13. Self-reliance

Completed by
Adolescents. Should only be used in conjunction with an assessment interview.

Reliability
Good for the first seven subscales shown above. Not so good for the remaining six.

Validity
Not known.

Interpretability
Straightforward.

Usability
Good.

Scariness
Could be a bit daunting to some children. It could be worthwhile reducing the items and focusing on the more reliable subscales.

Further information
http://www.nfer-nelson.co.uk
2. Early Development Instrument

What it measures
This is a teacher-completed checklist that assesses children’s readiness to learn when they start full-time education. It covers five areas:

1. Physical health and well being.
2. Social competence.
3. Emotional maturity
4. Language and cognitive development.
5. Communication skills and general knowledge.

There are additional non-comparative scales that address special skills and special problems. The instrument is intended to be used as a group indicator of general levels of readiness among a class, community, or other population segment of 4 and 5 year olds. There are serious concerns about the use of ‘school-readiness’ measures at the individual level as early ‘labeling’ may foreclose on children’s academic potential before they even get started. Therefore, the ideal use for this instrument would be as a measure used to compare schools or neighbourhoods, or to give a context for assessment of attainment scores.

Completed by
Primary school teachers.

Reliability
Good.

Validity
Good.

Standardisation
Good.

Interpretability
Straightforward. An administration and interpretation guide is available from the creators of the instrument. They can be contacted at

Magdalena Janus, Ph.D.
School Readiness to Learn Project
The Canadian Centre for Studies of Children at Risk
Phone: (905) 521-2100 ext. 77616 or 74377
Fax: (905) 574-6665
E-mail: janusm@fhs.mcmaster.ca

Usability
The measure should be relatively easy to use.

Scariness
Low, as it is a teacher completed scale.

Further information
http://www.uwfv.bc.ca/EarlyYears/edi.htm
3. Family Activity Scale

What it measures
There are two age-specific scales (2–6 and 7–12) that are designed to measure the environment that parents provide for children, through joint activities and support for independent activities. This includes information about the cultural and ideological environment in which children live, as well as how their carers respond to their children’s actions.

Completed by
Parent. Should only be used in conjunction with an assessment interview.

Reliability
Not known.

Validity
Not known.

Usability
Good.

Interpretability
Straightforward.

Scariness
Low.

Further information
4. Family Assessment Device

What it measures
The FAD measures six specific areas of family functioning (for example, problem solving, communication and affective involvement). There is also a scale designed to measure general functioning, (i.e. how things are going overall).

Completed by
Parents can do it themselves or the questions can be read to them and answers recorded by a trained interviewer. The advantage of you reading the questions is that it can be kept conversational. Should only be used in conjunction with an assessment interview.

Reliability
Good.

Validity
Good.

Interpretability
Requires some training or a read through the manual. An Access database add-on or stand-alone program is available that will score FAD scale results and print an interpretive feedback form.

Usability
The measure should be relatively easy to use. Some training is required to administer and interpret the measure reliably but it is not extensive.

Scariness
Low.

Further information
5. Family Economic Strain Scale

What it measures
Problems and negative perceptions associated with financial difficulties faced by families.

Completed by
Adults. Could be used in conjunction with an assessment interview but might also be included as a set of questions in a social survey.

Reliability
Good.

Validity
Not known.

Standardisation
Average.

Usability
Good.

Interpretability
Good.

Scariness
Low.

Further information
6. Family Resource Scale

What it measures
This scale is designed to assess whether or not there are adequate resources (money, energy and so on) to meet the needs of the family as a whole, and the needs of individual family members.

Completed by
Adults. Could be used in conjunction with an assessment interview but might also be included as a set of questions in a social survey.

Reliability
Good.

Validity
Good.

Standardisation
Good.

Usability
Good.

Interpretability
Straightforward regarding the total score. Although there are subscales, published sources do not make it clear which items belong with each subscale.

Scariness
Low.

Further information

7. Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment Scale

What it measures
The HOME scale facilitates assessment of significant environmental and child rearing factors. It goes beyond more general and problematic measures of factors such as socio-economic status and is designed to assess factors that have been shown to relate to intellectual development in children. It examines responsiveness of the primary-care parent towards the child, the extent to which the parent avoids restricting or punishing the child, the extent to which the child’s environment is organized both physically and in terms of daily or weekly routines, what sort of play materials are available, how involved the parent is with the child, and whether regular stimulation is provided.

There are four versions of the HOME scale covering the age groups 0–3, 3–6, 6–10 and 10–15.

Completed by
Trained practitioners

Reliability
Good.

Validity
Good.

Interpretability
Relatively straightforward. An Access database add-on or stand-alone program is available from the authors of the instrument which will score HOME scale results and print an interpretive feedback form.

Standardisation
Good.

Usability
The measure should be relatively easy to use.

Scariness
Low.

Further information
http://www.ualr.edu/~crtldept/home4.htm
8. Inventory of Parental Influence

What it measures
Measures children’s and parents’ perceptions of parental pressures and influences on the children’s intellectual and academic development. It covers parental pressure, psychological support, parental help, pressure for intellectual development and monitoring/time management.

Completed by
There are two versions, one for adults and the other for children. Should only be used in conjunction with an assessment interview.

Reliability
Good.

Validity
Not known.

Standardisation
Good.

Usability
Reasonable.

Interpretability
Reasonable.

Scariness
Moderate.

Further information
9. Parent-Child Closeness Scale

What it measures
Measure the self-perceptions of adolescents regarding the closeness of their relationship with each parent.

Completed by:
Adolescents. Questions could be read to a younger child. Could be used in conjunction with an assessment interview but might also be included as a set of questions in a social survey.

Reliability
Good.

Validity
Not known.

Standardisation
Good.

Usability
Good with older children.

Interpretability
Straightforward

Scariness
Low

Further information
10. Parental Monitoring Scale

What it measures
Measures parental awareness of their child’s whereabouts, friendships and activities pursued by the child during his/her free time.

Completed by:
Children. Could be used in conjunction with an assessment interview but might also be included as a set of questions in a social survey.

Reliability
Good.

Validity
Good.

Standardisation
Good.

Usability
Good with children over 10.

Interpretability
Straightforward.

Scariness
Low.

Further information
11. Parental Motivational Practices Scale

What it measures
The strategies employed by parents to encourage and motivate children towards academic performance.

Completed by
Parents. Could be used in conjunction with an assessment interview but might also be included as a set of questions in a social survey.

Reliability
Good.

Validity
Not known.

Standardisation
Not known.

Interpretability
Straightforward.

Usability
Relatively easy to use.

Scariness
Low.

Further information
12. Sense of Community Scale

What it measures
Designed to measure the sense of community felt by people within a large community or city, but could be appropriate where smaller, more distinct communities are of interest. It focuses on affiliation, control, safety, privacy, actualisation, aesthetics and spirituality. It produces an overall indication of each respondent’s perception of the community in which they live.

Completed by
Residents, either adults or young people. Could be used in conjunction with an assessment interview but might also be included as a set of questions in a social survey.

Reliability
Good

Validity
Good

Interpretability
Straightforward

Usability
Easy to use

Scariness
Low

Further information
13. Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

What it measures
Used to screen for emotional and behavioural problems in children and adolescents. The questionnaire incorporates five scales: pro-social, hyperactivity, emotional problems, conduct (behavioural) problems and peer problems.

This instrument has been widely used in Government sponsored social surveys. Consequently, national comparison data is likely to be available.

Completed by
Main carer and, possibly, schoolteachers. There is a version that can be completed by children aged 11–16. Should only be used in conjunction with an assessment interview.

Reliability
Good.

Validity
Good.

Standardisation
Good.

Usability
Good.

Scariness
Low.

Interpretability
Good.

Further information
http://www.sdqinfo.com
Annexe 2

A Selection of Assessment Instruments That Have Been Used to Assess Risk and Resilience

The tables included in this annexe provide information about instruments that have been be used in assessing whether young people are at risk of crime and antisocial behaviour. The tables provide particulars of the kinds of risk factor assessed by each instrument, who normally completes the instrument, and web addresses where further information can be obtained.

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<tr>
<td>Instrument</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Who instrument should be completed by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ONSET</strong></td>
<td>Helps to identify risk factors to be reduced and protective factors to be enhanced. It also provides information which might be helpful in selecting appropriate interventions for those identified as needing early intervention. When collated, the results may be used for monitoring and enable targeting of specific sub-groups where applicable, or provide progress data for steering groups. Includes a questionnaire for completion by young people</td>
<td>Early intervention teams</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ASSET</strong></td>
<td>Provides a common, structured framework for assessment of young people involved in the criminal justice system. It is a standard assessment of the factors contributing to a young person's offending and examines the main risk factors that lead to youth offending and also the protective factors that can prevent it. Includes a mental health screening tool</td>
<td>Youth Offending Teams</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Early assessment risk list for boys (EARL-20B)</strong></td>
<td>These instruments provide structured assessment of the risk of boys or girls aged under 12 engaging in antisocial behaviour. Each instrument consists of items that are scored 0 (not present) 1 (possibly present) or 2 (present). Ten items are based on a historical record, five on current clinical information and five on future risk management. It is a clinical tool, for use only by trained practitioners.</td>
<td>Practitioners in consultation with children and their parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early assessment risk list for girls (EARL-21G)</strong></td>
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</table>

Further information: [http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/PractitionersPortal/Assessment](http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk/PractitionersPortal/Assessment)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Risk factors addressed</th>
<th>Who instruments should be completed by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brown Attention-Deficit Disorder Scales for Children</td>
<td>Critical aspects of cognitive functioning relating to underlying problems within ADHD</td>
<td>Practitioners working with children aged 3–12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Risk factors addressed</th>
<th>Who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Behaviour Checklist (part of a comprehensive package of behaviour assessment tools)</td>
<td>Child development and behaviour</td>
<td>Parents of children aged 1½ – 5, Parents of children aged 4–18, Teachers of children aged 1½ –18, Young people aged 11–18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further information: [http://www.aseba.org/products/forms.html](http://www.aseba.org/products/forms.html)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Risk factors addressed</th>
<th>Who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages and Stages Questionnaire: social and emotional</td>
<td>Social and emotional behaviours appropriate to stages of development</td>
<td>Parent of child aged 6, 12, 18, 24, 30, 36, 48 and 60 months (8 separate questionnaires)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further information: [http://www.pbrookes.com/store/books/squires-asqse](http://www.pbrookes.com/store/books/squires-asqse)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Risk factors addressed</th>
<th>Who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT)</td>
<td>Substance abuse/use, Mental and physical health, Family relationships, Peer relationships, Educational status, Vocational status, Social skills, Leisure and recreation, Aggressive behaviour/delinquency</td>
<td>Young people aged 12–19</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Risk factors addressed</th>
<th>Who instruments should be completed by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Adaptation and Cohesion Scales (FACES)</td>
<td>Emotional bonding&lt;br&gt;Supportiveness&lt;br&gt;Family boundaries&lt;br&gt;Time and friends&lt;br&gt;Interests and recreation&lt;br&gt;Leadership and control&lt;br&gt;Discipline&lt;br&gt;Roles and rules</td>
<td>Family members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further information: [http://www.clas.uiuc.edu/special/evaltools/cl00954.html](http://www.clas.uiuc.edu/special/evaltools/cl00954.html)

| North Carolina Family Assessment Scale         | Child Functioning:<br>Health, behaviour, school performance, self-sufficiency<br>Parent Functioning:<br>Parenting skills, knowledge and attitudes, support, health, educational attainment, participation in community<br>Family Functioning:<br>Parent–child relationship, communication, cohesiveness, social support, economic sufficiency, conflict resolution<br>Community Functioning:<br>Accessibility of services, knowledge of services, families participation, number of community leaders, cultural and recreational opportunity, community cohesion<br>Individual Functioning:<br>Skills, knowledge, attitudes, support, health, participation in community, educational achievement | A family support worker in conjunction with a family member |

Further information: [http://ssw.unc.edu/jif/reports/Ncfas_20.pdf](http://ssw.unc.edu/jif/reports/Ncfas_20.pdf)

| Family Strengths Inventory                     | Spending time together<br>Commitment to each other<br>Communication<br>Dealing with crises positively<br>Expression of appreciation for each other<br>Closeness of spousal relationship<br>Closeness of parent–child relationship | Family members |

Further information: [http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SP155.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/SP155.pdf)
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<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Risk factors addressed</th>
<th>Who instruments should be completed by</th>
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<td>Family Environment Scale</td>
<td>Family cohesion</td>
<td>Family members aged 8 to adult</td>
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<td>Personal achievement orientation</td>
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<td>Independence</td>
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<td>Active-recreational orientation</td>
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<td>Family Assessment Measure</td>
<td>Family functioning: task accomplishment, role performance, communication, involvement, control, values and norms</td>
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<td>Parent practices that exclude or include child in decision making</td>
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<td>Parental trust in child’s decision making</td>
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### A2.4 Instruments used for assessing parenting factors

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Concerns Questionnaire</td>
<td>Maternal depression</td>
<td>Mothers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Housing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Problems with racism/culture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Household management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family criminal activity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parental drug/alcohol abuse</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parental relationship</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Child behaviour, health, attainment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Child discipline</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Involvement with children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Attachment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Expectations of children</td>
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<tr>
<th>Parenting Assessment Tool</th>
<th>Need for intervention</th>
<th>Youth Offending Teams</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant factors affecting parenting and family life</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Supporting parents in relation to needs of young person</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Supporting parents in relation to their own needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Categories of parenting problems</td>
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<td>Parenting styles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discipline supervision and communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Family relationships</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Further information: [http://www.tsa.uk.com](http://www.tsa.uk.com)
Annexe 3

Community Surveys

Issues to Address

This annexe outlines some of the issues that might be addressed through surveys of people who live in a particular community or neighbourhood. It covers a range of issues that affect the risk of young people engaging in crime and helps to identify the strengths that might provide opportunities for promoting protective factors.

Social Networks and Support Structures

- frequency of contact with family and friends (outside the household)
- whether someone can be called on in times of sickness
- frequency with which neighbours are visited
- degree to which individuals know other people in the neighbourhood
- frequency of doing favours for neighbours

Social and Community Participation

- picking up other people’s rubbish when you come across it
- active involvement in community projects, groups or networks
- participation in local community action in response to an emergency or crisis
- altruism, philanthropy and voluntary work
- whether respondent gives up time freely to help others
- whether monetary donations are made to charitable and not-for-profit organisations
- level of support for newcomers, including refugees

Civic and Political Involvement and Empowerment

- attendance at local community events
- degree of involvement in local, state or national issues
- degree of awareness of local people, events and politics
- whether ward councillor or local MP has been contacted by phone, email, post or face to face
- willingness to speak out in public meetings
- voting in local elections

Trust in People and Social Institutions

- the extent to which people in the neighbourhood can be trusted
- experiences of crime
- beliefs about personal safety when walking alone in the local area after dark
- beliefs about the potential for becoming a victim of crime
- level of confidence that political parties, politicians, police and public servants will act in the public good
- level of confidence in churches, trade unions, large corporations, the media

Tolerance of Diversity

- feelings about the effect of multiculturalism on the local area
- degree of tolerance for diversity
- level of disagreements or tensions between ethnic groups
- level of co-operation displayed between groups

Table A3.1 provides examples of instruments that have been used for assessing how many young people in a community are at risk of involvement in criminal or antisocial behaviour.
### Table A3.1 Some instruments that have been used in community surveys.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Risk factors addressed</th>
<th>Who instruments should be completed by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communities That Care</td>
<td>Pro-social involvement in community attachment, Community disorganisation, Transitions and mobility, Laws and norms favourable to drugs/crime, Family attachment, Opportunity for involvement in family, Family discipline and supervision, Family history of antisocial behaviour, Parental attitudes favourable to drugs/alcohol, Opportunity for involvement at school, School performance and commitment, Early initiation of problem behaviour at school, Peer delinquency, Peer attitudes to delinquency/drug use</td>
<td>Young people aged 10–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Kids Survey:</td>
<td>Alcohol and drug use, Violence and school safety, Physical activity, Diet, Tobacco use, Peer drug use and delinquency, Sexual behaviour, Caring relationships, High expectations, Opportunities to participate, Social competence, Autonomy and purpose</td>
<td>Children and young people aged 7–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>including resilience assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td>There are three versions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further information: [http://communitiesthatcare.org.uk](http://communitiesthatcare.org.uk)

Further information: [http://www.wested.org/hks/](http://www.wested.org/hks/)
Researchers have shown that a positive school climate is significant in building resilience against violence, crime and antisocial behaviour. They have identified 13 characteristics or principles that, together, have proven effective in making schools safe. Many of these characteristics are already present in most schools, but some may be missing or need enhancing. The 13 characteristics are:

- focusing on academic achievement
- involving families in meaningful ways
- developing links to the community
- emphasising positive relations among students and staff
- discussing safety issues openly
- treating students with equal respect
- creating ways for students to share their (safety) concerns
- helping children to feel safe when expressing their feelings
- following a protocol for referring children who are suspected of being abused or neglected
- offering extended day programmes
- promoting good citizenship and good character
- identifying problems and assessing progress towards solutions
- supporting students in making transitions to adult life and to the workplace

Planning Through Self-assessment

To develop an effective plan, the school should have a team responsible for spearheading its design, implementation and evaluation. School teams, which should ideally consist of teachers, parents and other members of the local community, need to conduct ongoing assessment using the 13 principles to help develop and monitor a comprehensive plan.

School safety requires open discussion. School surveys might be useful. Ask students to use maps to define safe and unsafe areas (e.g. marking safe places

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110 Adapted from Dwyer, K. A Safe School Checklist, a set of principles endorsed by the US Departments of Education and Justice available at http://www.veaweteach.org
green and unsafe places red). Students need to be able to share their concerns and express their feelings, both fears of bullying and the normal stresses of the world outside the school gates. Extended day programmes prevent young people from engaging in risky behaviours and can provide academic and behavioural support to all children. Promoting citizenship and character has been shown to increase students’ problem-solving skills and sense of worth. Transition into adulthood is far more difficult than many people perceive, and planning for that process reduces stress. Sometimes overlooked are the numerous other transitions in children’s lives, from infant to junior school (or from first to middle school), and after a move, family disruption, hospitalisation or return from an alternative school.

**Conducting the assessment**

The process of assessment should identify the school’s strengths, analyse needs and develop solutions. For instance, if the assessment team learns that children are not learning to read (a serious cause of later conduct problems) the school may require an individualised reading programme, smaller class sizes and teacher retraining.

**Planning**

The key to a safe school is planning, staff commitment and administrative support for policies and resources that enable prevention. The success of school-wide prevention hinges on:

- clearly defined expectations
- consistent implementation of disciplinary procedures and consequences
- teaching of appropriate behaviour to staff, students and families
- support for staff and students in achieving high behavioural and academic standards
- ongoing data collection and dissemination
- positive recognition and public acknowledgement of appropriate behaviour
- options that allow teachers to continue instruction when behavioural problems occur and crisis interventions for dangerous behaviour
- collaboration with family, community and services
- high-quality leadership
- special services that address the needs of students with serious behavioural problems
Annexe 5

Some Useful Contacts

**Action for Prisoner's Families**, 2nd Floor, Cambridge House, Cambridge Grove, London W6 0LE

Tel: 020 8741 4578  
Fax: 020 8748 5867  
Email: info@prisonersfamilies.org.uk  
http://www.prisonersfamilies.org.uk

**Barnardo's**, Tanners Lane, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1QG

Tel: 020 8550 8822  
Fax: 020 8551 6870  
http://www.barnardos.co.uk

**Bullying Online**,  
http://www.bullying.co.uk

**Childline**, Studd Street, London N1 0QW

Tel: 020 7239 1000  
Fax: 020 7239 1001  
http://www.childline.org.uk

**Children in Northern Ireland**, 216 Belmont Road, Belfast BT4 2AT

Tel: 028 9065 2713  
Fax: 028 9065 2825  
Email: info@ci-ni.org.uk  
http://www.ci-ni.org.uk

**Children in Scotland**, Princes House, 5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh. EH2 4RG,

Tel: +44 (0)131 228 8484  
Fax: +44 (0)131 228 8585  
Email: info@childreninscotland.org.uk  
http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk

**Children in Wales**, 25 Windsor Place, Cardiff CF10 3BZ

Tel: 02920342434  
Fax: 02920343134  
Email: info@childreninwales.org.uk  
http://www.childreninwales.org.uk
Children’s Society, Edward Rudolph House, Margery Street, London WC1X 0JL

Tel: 020 7841 4436
Fax: 020 7841 4500
Email: info@childrenssociety.org.uk
http://www.the-childrens-society.org.uk

Children, Young People and Families Directorate, Department for Education and Skills, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT

Tel: 0870 000 2288
http://www.dfes.gov.uk

Crime Concern, Beaver House, 147–150 Victoria Road, Swindon, Wiltshire SN1 3UY

Tel: 01793 863500
Fax: 01793 863555
Email: info@crimeconcern.org.uk
http://www.crimeconcern.org.uk

Divert – The national charity for the prevention of youth crime
The Divert Trust, 33 King Street, London WC2E 8JD

Tel: 020 7379 6171
Fax: 020 7240 2082
Email: info@divert.org
http://www.divert.org

Drugscope, 32–36 Loman Street, London SE1 0EE

Tel: 020 7928 1211
Fax: 020 7928 1771
Email: services@drugscope.org.uk
http://www.drugscope.org.uk

Fathers Direct, Herald House, Lambs Passage, Bunhill Row, London, EC1Y 8TQ

Phone: 020 7920 9491
Fax: 020 7374 2966
http://www.fathersdirect.com

Home-start UK, Head Office, 2 Salisbury Road, Leicester LE1 7QR

Tel: 0116 233 9955
Email: info@home-start.org.uk
http://www.home-start.org.uk

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International Center for the Prevention of Crime
Tel: (001) 514 288 6731
Fax: (001) 514 288 8763
http://www.crime-prevention-intl.org

Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Homestead, 40 Water End, York, North Yorkshire YO30 6WP
Tel: 01904 629241
Fax: 01904 620072
Email: info@jrf.org.uk
http://www.jrf.org.uk

National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, 169 Clapham Road, London SW9 0PU
Tel: 020 7582 6500
Fax: 020 7735 4666
Email: communications@nacro.org.uk
http://www.nacro.org.uk

National Children’s Bureau, 8, Wakley Street, London EC1U 7QE
Tel: 020 7843 6000
Fax: 020 7278 9512
http://www.ncb.org.uk

National Crimebeat, Woking Probation Centre, White Rose Court, Oriental Road, Woking, Surrey GU22 7PJ
Tel: 01483 718454
Email: info@nationalcrimebeat.fsnet.co.uk
http://www.national-crimebeat.org.uk

National Family and Parenting Institute, 430 Highgate Studios, 53–79 Highgate Road, London NW5 1TL
Tel: 020 7424 3460
Fax: 020 7485 3590
Email: info@nfpi.org
http://www.nfpi.org
http://www.e-parents.org.uk
National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, National Centre, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH

Tel: 020 7825 2500
Fax: 020 7825 2525
http://www.nspcc.org.uk

National Statistics, Cardiff Road, Newport NP10 8XG

Tel: 0845 601 3034
Fax: 0163 365 2747
Email: info@statistics.gov.uk
http://www.statistics.gov.uk

National Youth Agency, 17–23 Albion Street, Leicester LE1 6GD

Tel: 0116 285 3700
Fax: 0116 285 3775
Email: youthinformation@nya.org.uk
http://www.nya.org.uk

Newcastle Centre for Family Studies, 18 Windsor Terrace, University of Newcastle, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU

Tel: 0191 222 7642
Fax: 0191 222 7871
Email: NCFS@ncl.ac.uk
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ncfs

Parenting Education and Support Forum, Unit 431 Highgate Studios, 53–79 Highgate Road, London NW5 1TL

Tel: 020 7284 8370
Fax: 020 7485 3587
Email: PESF@dial.pipex.com
http://www.parenting-forum.org.uk

Social Exclusion Unit, Cabinet Office, 35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BQ

Tel: 020 7276 2055
Fax: 020 7276 2056
Email: alan.parsons@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk
http://www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/seu
The Prince’s Trust, 18 Park Square East, London NW1 4LH
Tel: 020 7543 1234
Fax: 020 7543 12000
Email: info@princes-trust.org.uk
http://www.princes-org.uk

Trust for the Study of Adolescence, 23, New Road, Brighton BN1 1W2
Tel: 01273 693311
Fax: 01273 679907
Email: info@tsa.uk.com
http://www.tsa.uk.com

Youth Justice Board, 11 Carteret Street, London SW1H 9DL
Tel: 020 7271 3033
http://www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk

Zero2nineteen – a new start for children and young people, Quadrant House
The Quadrant, Sutton, Surrey, SM2 5AS
Tel: 01444 475612,
Fax: 01444 445441
http://www.zero2nineteen.co.uk/Home/default.asp