

Anti-social behaviour unit
Home Office 4th floor Fry building,
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

17 May 2011

Dear Colleague,

More effective responses to anti-social behaviour

The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) is the independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in England. A diverse network of over 280 national voluntary youth organisations and regional and local youth networks, NCVYS has been working since 1936 to raise the profile of youth work, share good practice and influence policy that has an impact on young people and the organisations that support them.

NCVYS supports the response of our member, Catch22, to the Home Office's consultation on *More effective responses to anti-social behaviour*. NCVYS would like to emphasise a couple of points in their submission. The voluntary and community youth sector (VCYS) plays a vital role in supporting young people who are displaying, or at risk of displaying, anti-social behaviour. The complex, deeply-rooted problems that lie at the heart of antisocial behaviour can be effectively addressed by ensuring the availability of support services in local communities, many of which are most successfully delivered by the VCYS. We are concerned, however, that the potential for the funding cuts to these services, which we have documented in our *Comprehensive Cuts* reports,¹ will present a real challenge to efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour caused by young people.

We echo Catch22's beliefs that in order to address anti-social behaviour by young people the primary focus must be on interventions that provide intensive support and encouragement, rather than punitive measures. Measures which direct young people's energy and enthusiasm into positive activities will reduce anti-social behaviour dramatically. Providing young people with support and opportunities will ensure that they can make an outstanding contribution to their community.

Yours sincerely



Faiza Chaudary
Head of Policy and Communications

¹ *Comprehensive Cuts – Part 2: Tracking funding and policies and their impact on young people*, NCVYS (December 2010) <http://bit.ly/compcuts2>

Anti-social behaviour unit

By email: asb-consultation@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Tuesday 10th May 2011

Dear Colleague,

More effective responses to anti-social behaviour

Catch22 welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Government's consultation on anti-social behaviour. We support the proposals to both simplify and clarify powers to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Catch22 also strongly endorses the proposition to introduce 'positive requirements' as part of the Criminal Behaviour Order and the Crime Prevention Injunction. Sanctions need to be balanced with support and intervention. Our experience shows that by channelling young people's energy and enthusiasm into more positive activities we can reduce anti-social behaviour dramatically. By tackling the real difficulties young people face, and with the right help, they can make an outstanding contribution to their community.

We also welcome the consultation's focus on victims. From our experience of working with young victims, we know that when it comes to anti-social behaviour, they simply want it to stop. Restorative justice approaches have been shown to be extremely supportive in supporting young victims.

Catch22 is a member of a number of coalitions which are submitting responses to this consultation; the Criminal Justice Alliance, the Transition to Adulthood Alliance, and the Standing Committee on Youth Justice (SCYJ). Catch22 endorses all of these consultation responses.

Further to these responses, Catch22 would like to bring to the attention of the consultation unit the following key concerns with regard to the proposals;

- The consultation makes no reference to the specific issues faced by young people. There is increasing evidence to show that young adulthood is a distinct life stage and that young adults require separate and different types of support to help them tackle their anti-social behaviour. Catch22 believes that measures to address anti-social behaviour by young people should primarily be focused on informal interventions that provide intensive support and encouragement, rather than punitive measures.
- The new powers to tackle anti-social behaviour need to be recorded in a way which identifies the extent that they are used on young people aged 16-24, and the outcomes that these measures have. Current anti-social behaviour statistics are only recorded for either below or over 18 years without any further breakdown.
- The voluntary and community sector (VCS) have enormous potential to support young people who are displaying, or at risk of displaying, anti-social behaviour. Catch22 has experience of providing early intervention and prevention services, such as Youth Inclusion Programmes, which have been shown to reduce anti-social behaviour. The appendix contains examples of Catch22 services which have positive outcomes of reducing anti-social behaviour. The VCS are also well placed to deliver services which support young people as part of the new 'positive requirements' should they be subject to an order.
- We believe that the complex, deeply-rooted problems that lie at the heart of antisocial behaviour can be effectively addressed by ensuring the availability of support services in local communities, including youth services, family support and health services. Catch22 is concerned, however, that the potential for the funding cuts to youth services will present a real challenge in everyone's efforts to reduce anti-social behaviour caused by young people.
- There should be a stronger focus on the use of restorative justice in order to respond to antisocial behaviour. Catch22 has extensive experience of delivering restorative justice which delivers positive outcomes in this area. Catch22 research has found that young people feel favourable to the idea of restorative justice and it has been shown to help resolve some of the fears young victims can develop.
- Catch22 would strongly urge against the use of custody for young people as a result of breaching an anti-social behaviour order. Every opportunity should be taken to divert young people away from the criminal justice system and we are concerned that the possibility of custody as a consequence of breach conflicts

with the Ministry of Justice's stated aim to reserve prison for serious and dangerous offenders².

Please do not hesitate to contact Kim Harper at kim.harper@catch-22.org.uk if you would like further information on all or any of these points.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a period at the end.

Pat Thompson
Assistant Director of Communications
Catch22

Email: pat.thompson@catch-22.org.uk

Telephone: 0207 336 4800

² Breaking the Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders, 2010. Ministry of Justice. Available online at <http://www.justice.gov.uk/docs/breaking-the-cycle.pdf>

Appendix: Catch22 services working to tackle anti-social behaviour

Catch22 Lawrence Weston YIP

Catch22 Lawrence Weston YIP offers tailor-made schemes for 13-17 year olds who are most at risk of getting into trouble with the law, skipping school or becoming isolated from their friends and family.

Lawrence Weston in Bristol is a high crime area where youth crime is a real issue for the whole community. Many young people who are referred to the YIP are in crisis and faced with tackling significant problems in their lives. The project involves a wide range of activities such as weekly one-to-one contact, a mentoring scheme, conflict resolution groups to help with anger management, and parenting interventions based on the positive parenting programme.

Results show there has been improved school attendance and general behaviour, confidence and self-esteem. Last year there was 100% engagement by the core group of young people, plus over 60% reduction in the factors associated with the young person's risk of offending. We also had an 87% reduction in arrest rates of the target group.

Positive Futures

Positive Futures is a national activity-based social inclusion programme for young people aged 10 to 19 years old. Launched in 2001, the programme helps young people from deprived communities steer clear of crime and drugs and move forward in their lives.

Positive Futures reaches young people where they are through activities that young people want to engage in. Activities range from sports like football, dance and boxing to fishing, fitness and arts based projects. Projects aim to get young people excited and involved, this is then a means to build relationships and help young people steer clear of drugs, alcohol and crime.

Relationships are at the programme's heart. By building mutual trust and respect, staff and volunteers are well-placed to provide young people with both challenge and support. Positive Futures sticks with young people for the long-term. Young people often join the programme in their early teens and go on to take on leadership roles.

Since that start of Suffolk Positive Futures holiday programme in Ipswich, Suffolk police have recorded a **50% reduction in crime by 10-19 year olds**. The project was **awarded the Office for Criminal Justice Reform's Justice Award** for their Thursday night work in Stowmarket where there has been a **25% reduction in anti-social behaviour**.³

³ Positive Futures, *Working for Us*, 2009.