Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt, Comhionannais agus Athchóirithe Dlí

White Paper on Crime

First Discussion Document:
Crime Prevention and Community Safety

Summary of Consultation Process
November/December 2009

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Introduction

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has commenced a process to develop a White Paper on Crime. The White Paper, due to be completed in 2011, will set out the overall policy framework within which strategies to combat and prevent crime will be implemented. The process to develop the White Paper will examine system-wide approaches to intervention, prevention and enforcement, with a view to reducing offending and protecting the public.

A key element in the process to develop the White Paper on Crime is the production of a series of discussion documents which will be used to give structure to the very broad range of subjects which will need to be examined as part of the process. The first of these documents has been published (July 2009) and deals with 'Crime Prevention and Community Safety'.

Consultation is an essential part of the development of the White Paper on Crime. The Department is undertaking extensive and inclusive consultation as part of the process, utilising a variety of formats. Members of the public, together with the relevant public agencies and other interested bodies will have a full opportunity to contribute to the policy's formulation. Written submissions, regional seminars and meetings with key stakeholders form the backbone of the consultation process.

With this in mind, consultation has taken place on the first discussion document, 'Crime Prevention and Community Safety'. Interested parties were invited to make written submissions in response to the document and a series of 5 regional seminars were held in November and December 2009 with key stakeholders. This report, which was prepared by the Institute of Public Administration (IPA), summarises the output from the regional seminars. A summary of the written submissions will be produced separately.

Process for the Consultation Seminars

Approach

The first discussion document of the White Paper on Crime examines the area of Crime Prevention under the following headings:

- **Reducing opportunities for crime** – making it harder for crimes to be committed in the first place;

- Using **locally based partnerships** to change the conditions in neighbourhoods so as to reduce crime;

- Working to **prevent first-time criminality** among those most at risk of becoming involved in crime; and

- Acting to **reduce the likelihood of re-offending** among those found guilty of offences.

The approach taken in the consultation seminars was to ask participants to provide feedback under each of these four broad themes using two core questions:

- How well are existing crime prevention measures working in this area?

- What scope is there for further development in this area?

Locations and Attendees

Five regional seminars were held for this part of the consultation process on the dates and in the locations listed below.

5/11/09	Dundalk
12/11/09	Sligo
19/11/09	Dublin
26/11/09	Athlone
2/12/09	Cork

Participants were invited to attend by written invitation from the Department. Invitees included statutory agencies, Joint Policing Committees, and a wide range of voluntary and community organisations.

The number of attendees at the five seminars was in the region of 200.

Consultation Seminar Structure

Each seminar was 2.5 hours long and followed the same structure, with the IPA acting as an independent facilitator/ chair for the session. At each meeting opening remarks were made by senior departmental and Garda officers. The attendees then moved into four working groups, each working on one of the four themes outlined above and analysing it under the two broad questions indicated. Notes were taken throughout the working groups and plenary session, where each working group fed back a summary of their discussions and the topic was opened to the floor for comments.

What follows below is a summary of the feedback and discussions at the five consultation seminars, with references to similar points brought together to provide a coherent overview. Every effort has been made to ensure that all substantive points raised at each location are incorporated.

It should be noted that the content which follows presents the views expressed at the regional consultations and not necessarily those of the Department. It should also be noted that many of the points appear under a number of headings, reflecting the discussions which took place and the fact that all of the issues are inter-connected.

1. Reducing the Opportunities for Crime

Discussion in this area was guided by the following questions:

- How well are existing measures to reduce opportunities for crime working? (e.g. crime prevention advice, CCTV, street lighting, control of excessive alcohol consumption)

- What scope is there for further development?

Participants were also asked to consider the following issues:

- Different crime prevention techniques and their strengths and weaknesses.
- Communication about local crime prevention/ reduction measures and successes.
- Role of communities in considering aspects of their local living environment and their impact on law and order.
- New types of crime and how to prevent them.
- Effective use of scarce resources in crime prevention.

In this area the responses from the seminars have been grouped under five themes and the two core questions asked under each theme.

1.1 An Garda Síochána

How well are existing measures to reduce opportunities for crime working?

Responses showed significant agreement between all locations on the issue of Community Gardaí and the need to increase their numbers, increase their visibility in the community and provide more opportunities to build rapport and trust between the Gardaí and the local community. More emphasis needs to be placed on the sharing of information between agencies and more pro-activity by Gardaí needed to communicate with all groups in society. All locations indicated that knowledge and awareness of existing crime reduction measures could be improved. Points raised were:

- The Community Gardaí are seen as very positive in terms of building up rapport. They are very useful in the community and especially in crime prevention.
- Garda bicycle patrols are deemed to work while visibility of Gardaí on street is seen as a huge deterrent to crime.

- There was variation in the level of knowledge and awareness of Garda services. e.g. '*We know very little about the services that are provided by An Garda Síochána*'.
- Gardaí are effective when dealing with residents' associations for spreading information.
- A lot of work has been done but the nature of crime changes all the time and doesn't remain static.
- Some locations indicated that people have great fear and insecurity that they are not properly protected. They perceive that a greater Garda presence would provide some protection.
- Policing of estates was explored leading to the view that Garda '*appearances should not be regular*' (i.e. not same time every day or every week).
- Some locations felt that more Garda resources are needed locally.
- One location suggested that the role of the Garda is too diffuse. Could there be re-allocation of functions to allow more time in the community?
- One location suggested that civilians could take over some functions currently being done by Gardaí (non-specialist roles e.g. providing advice).
- Gardaí focus on detection more than prevention as detection is considered to be easier to measure.
- Need to quantify the role of the Community Garda in terms of prevention. '*Can we measure the crime that isn't happening?*'.
- Different types of policing needed in urban and rural areas.

"Gardaí have limited resources, it's up to us in community services to go to our local Gardaí and find out what's on offer"

"Gardaí should be walking or on bikes not just in cars; people feel more secure"

What scope is there for further development?

All locations made several suggestions for developing relationships with the Gardaí and collective community involvement. Specific points raised:

- Information and education from Gardaí about how homeowners and elderly people at home can keep themselves secure is very important and where it is sought, is working well. Perhaps the Gardaí could produce a leaflet on ways to improve home security. At the same time, there is a need to be sensitive to how this is explained as it may make older people living alone, more nervous. It is important to give a sense of balance on this issue
- Increase number of foot patrols/Garda patrols at night.
- Rural areas should have Gardaí located in the area.

- Need quicker response times for minor break-ins/incidences.
- There needs to be '*better enforcement of street drinking laws*'. Suggestion of '*On the spot fine to address drinking abuse*'.
- Assign Gardaí to school attendance and reduce truancy and thereby opportunities for crime to be committed.
- Various organisations working in own distinct areas but opportunities still exist to work together more. Increase consultation with Joint Policing Committees and ensure all parties, including Gardaí, involved.
- It was suggested that Gardaí should put information into local newsletters and use that medium to get their messages across to the public.
- The issue of communication between Gardaí and members of the community was raised a number of times. The general public have little or no contact with the Gardaí on a day-to-day basis. Where An Garda Síochána produce information leaflets, these need to be promoted actively as most people are not aware of these services, for example, a leaflet on ways to improve home security.
- It was suggested by some that the Gardaí are the most appropriate source of locally specific advice on how to protect the homes and person from being a victim of crime.

"Where An Garda Síochána produce information leaflets these need to be promoted actively as most people are not aware of these services"

1.2   Community Issues

How well are existing measures to reduce opportunities for crime working?

Many aspects of community were explored with effective community initiatives in specific areas cited. All locations mentioned the need for improved communication and more opportunities to connect with as wide a number of people as possible. It was generally held that there is a need to strengthen community ties and build on existing community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert schemes. Specific points raised were:

- Partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau is seen as effective at spreading information on how to reduce crime.
- Garda Crime prevention liaison service is effective in providing advice.
- There is a general lack of public knowledge of crime reduction measures. Neighbourhood Watch schemes might achieve this. Reference was made to an example of how the 'meals on wheels'

- initiative was an informal Neighbourhood Watch service as meals on wheels staff 'keep an eye' on older people and provide reassurance.

- There is a perception that there is no protection for victims or witnesses of crime. It was mentioned that if a person has to identify a criminal, they must do so in person. '*This is very intimidating and witnesses or victims are fearful of gang reprisal*'.

- A better understanding needed of the role for people involved in Neighbourhood Watch which is seen as a support group for the elderly, not vigilantes.

- Views were expressed about the changing role of family in society which is seen as increasing the number of problems.

- The rural/urban divide was mentioned in most locations with different needs and demands. The question of how to maximise limited resources within the rural community was mentioned in most locations.

- The needs of the rural community are seen as a different set of problems. Isolation and elderly people living alone are the main issues. Elderly are seen as being particularly vulnerable. The tendency to keep cash in their homes is making them a target for criminals.

- One location's discussion indicated that there are different problems in housing estates e.g. anti-social areas. Particular reference was made to RAPID area in Athlone where trained volunteers work one morning a week with people in the estates to provide information on where to go to solve problems. This was deemed to be very successful and, in the view of one participant, '*costs practically nothing*'. This has been supported very well, and '*has provided information which has been acted on*'.

- Within communities, greater pro-activity is needed to combat problems before they arise. There are certain known times of the year which are youth 'flashpoints' – heightened youth activities, which incur interaction with Gardaí, e.g., Easter, Christmas, term events/celebrations.

"*How do you prevent the elderly keeping so much cash? Is it because local post offices and small bank branches are gone?*"

What scope is there for further development?

A common feature of the discussion centred on community spirit and ways in which this could be revitalised and fostered in an effort to reduce the incidence of minor crimes. Many referred to the need for greater communication. Specific points made:

- An Garda Síochána is not the only organisation responsible for the community. While An Garda Síochána should be at the centre of crime prevention strategies communities should also be involved.

- More regular communication to increase information sharing and awareness of issues and decrease the opportunities for crime.
- Strengthen community ties and build on existing community groups such as Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert schemes.
- Encourage a Buddy System and increased contact between neighbours
- Develop a Garda slot on Community radio.
- Enhance volunteerism in the community.
- Consider communication through brochures/leaflets aimed at specific groups /meetings.
- Some suggested that community spirit should be brought back and that people should watch out for each other.
- Improve community services to at-risk families – target high risk areas especially those families that seek an escape from crime.
- Advice to older people on how to safely manage their money is needed.
- Concern also expressed about the elderly in the community. At the moment there are very few social workers with responsibility for dealing with older people in comparison with those numbers working with young people. There is also no coordination between those working with the elderly and the Gardaí. There are no protection officers for older people but there are plenty of juvenile focused officers. The elderly are more vulnerable in society and are a special group. There is no legislation covering the elderly; in fact more protection of animals is afforded in law than of the elderly.
- Out-of-hours service:- There needs to be more than just 9-5 Mon-Fri services available in order to provide support to individuals and communities working to address crime prevention and local community development issues.
- There is concern about how to manage when a crime has been committed against someone in their home. The question posed was '*Is there any way to prevent violence after the criminals break in?* What can be done when burglars look for money and threaten violence? Would a public campaign work so that criminals understand that people no longer keep cash in their homes?
- Develop a community logo along the lines of Community Watch whereby the criminals would know that the community are very aware of not keeping cash in their homes.
- More funding is needed for advice with a significant role for Gardaí on this issue.
- Local knowledge of the ways to prevent crime is a major area. "Incorporate community experiences and local knowledge in prevention strategies".
- Personal responsibility to take precautions, educate people to not present the criminal with an opportunity.
- The need to be sensitive to fear of crime in certain sections of society, for example, the elderly was mentioned. There is a need to ensure that when communicating details of crime in a local area or particular issues arising around crime, the fear of crime in individuals is not increased. Consciousness of crime must be balanced against the possibility of increased fear of crime such that some individuals, for instance, the elderly do not want to leave their homes.

- Incorporate Community Alert and Neighbourhood Watch schemes input into City/County development plans.

"*Incorporate community experiences and local knowledge in prevention strategies*"

"*Ensure residents associations/Neighbourhood Watch established in new housing areas.*"

1.3   Technology and Environment

How well are existing measures to reduce opportunities for crime working?

The role of technology and the built environment formed the basis of much discussion. Essentially, CCTV was seen as critical to preventing crime while lighting and the physical layout of environments could impact on opportunities for crime. Points made:

- CCTV raises perception of safety. Much of the discussion centred on whether CCTV was good value for money but ultimately it was viewed that '*people's safety cannot be quantified.*'
- Others felt that the use of CCTV is viewed very positively in terms of prevention and seen as '*value-wise, very efficient*'.
- Some concern for privacy protection, data protection, and worry about 'nosey neighbour' syndrome. It is important to balance the need for safety against the right to privacy.
- Some areas had different experiences of CCTV. One group felt that Mullingar and Athlone CCTV is working well. Other places like Roscommon, where funding has been made available have also benefited from the availability of CCTV. However, others expressed the view that 'it's *not coming through to fruition in the smaller areas; we have been let down.*'
- There is a need for high quality modern CCTV equipment to avoid obscured images.
- One view is that CCTV "pushes" crime from one area to another.
- It was generally held that CCTV was '*not feasible in rural areas.*' but the possibility of having '*portable CCTV*' was posed, it might help '*prevent illegal dumping*'.
- Street lighting is vital in supporting crime reduction. The need to work with other agencies was explored as it was deemed that '*urban areas need to be constantly illuminated, repaired, and maintained*'. Lights themselves can become targets of vandalism.
- Residents of estates want graffiti to be dealt with.

- Concern about '*through paths*' was expressed e.g. alleyways, back entrances and lanes need to be closed up to help prevent crime.
- It was noted by one person that purpose-built environments e.g. new apartment blocks '*are reducing incidents of crime, because they are easier to police and manage*'.
- A number of locations thought that the planning section of local authorities should incorporate awareness of the potential to increase/decrease crime when assessing planning applications of housing estates.

"*Urban areas need to be constantly lit up, repaired, and maintained. Visibility of crime reduces instances of crime.*"

What scope is there for further development?

Some suggestions were made in relation to the use of technology and modifying the built environment which centred on lighting, CCTV, and the layout and design of the built environment. Points made:

- Extend use of CCTV to individual properties, e.g., homes, businesses. Investigate opportunities for funding for this especially for those who are the most vulnerable in society.
- Discussion around use of photos of suspected thieves posted on premises to act as deterrent but also about taking policing into local hands. This approach was taken in UK but the group was mostly wary of such an approach as it hasn't worked in some instances in Ireland and those who use it could face defamation problems as a result.
- CCTV is not being supplied to local communities. There is the view that not only a few large towns, but also smaller towns, should get it.
- More CCTV and lighting of higher quality needed.
- Take into account the different rural and urban needs.
- Investigate the use of mobile CCTV.

1.4 Children and Young People

In this theme many of the issues discussed overlap with other areas and are mentioned under the other headings. However, there were some specific recommendations made in terms of scope for improvement which relate to youth and reducing opportunities for crime. These are:

- Improve Gardaí public relations especially with young people, '*don't tar us all with the same brush*'. It was suggested that respect has to be given in the first instance so that it can be reciprocated,   while

one person said, '*not every young person walking out on the street at night is a criminal*'. Reference was made to the need for Gardaí to adopt greater co-operation with adolescents in terms of building trust.

- Need for civics module in the school to '*teach responsible citizenship*' will change the culture and emphasise personal responsibility.
- Intervene at a younger age by involving Gardaí in schools earlier. This would be an important step in youth civic education and would be seen as preventative in nature.
- Need to get youth involved in sports at much younger age - at 6 /7 years of age.
- Increase consultation with youth groups re issues/ partnership/ disadvantaged areas.
- "*Enshrine parental responsibility in policy.*"
- Educate parents and young on what is acceptable behaviour.
- Reference was made to the Rainbow Programme, which is seen as very successful but the vetting of people/volunteers should be "*speeded up*".
- Protect 'at-risk' children from gangs and adopt an integrated approach with all relevant organisation being involved.
- '*Schools – an area that is getting very worrying*'. The speaker felt that there is a need to get to them quickly to prevent crime. Is it possible to involve more of the community in supporting youth to develop themselves and limit their introduction to anti-social behaviour?

1.5   Alcohol/Drugs

How well are existing measures to reduce opportunities for crime working?

The contribution of alcohol and drug abuse to crime was discussed. Points made:

- Certain campaigns were examined e.g. drink driving, smoking bans, with the question posed: '*Does alcohol education currently work?*'.
- There is a concern about more people drinking at home, no-one is regulating their consumption i.e. barman, leads to more excessive drinking.
- Price of alcohol makes it attractive to young people; cheaper alcohol (cost of off-licence/supermarket vs. pub) encourages '*at-home drinking*'. There is a need to revisit Happy Hour regulations.
- Rag Weeks were discussed where alcohol abuse is seen as acceptable.
- Use of GAA in this area about drinking responsibly and celebrating positively.
- Vintners play a role in controlling the product.

- Measures to combat excessive drinking are not working, but we should not criminalise young people for excessive drinking due to drastic consequences for their futures. Young people becoming criminalised by these incidents with alcohol when perhaps they don't need to be.
- It was suggested that cultural and peer pressure need to be addressed through education.

One location made reference to the proliferation of headshops in Athlone and Mullingar 'which really needs to be looked at'. There is a sense of powerlessness in the community especially among parents and children usually not involved in crime. Gardaí say they are not illegal and there's nothing they can do. It was noted that Drugs Awareness Scheme has been watching these in Athlone.

What scope is there for further development?

Where this was discussed, it was generally held that parents, sports and schools are critical to developing responses to crime arising from abuse of alcohol and drugs. Points made:

- Need for personal and parental responsibility in terms of alcohol.
- Role of drinks' manufacturers in encouraging responsible drinking (not tokenism).
- Fines rather than court sanctions shown to be successful in other areas.
- Transition year alcohol awareness, good citizenship and social ownership programmes.
- Control use in the media – alcohol in soaps (a negative stereotype), sports, advertising.

"*Discourage alco-pops*"

"*Use fines to curb alcohol fuelled behaviours.*"

"*A lot of local addicts queue for 'stuff' in these headshops. We have to get these unscrupulous people out of our towns. We really have to stop this. They are illegal in Germany and US. There is a precedent in Europe. There must be something we can do here.*"

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2. Local Partnerships to Co-ordinate Crime Prevention

Discussion in this area was guided by the following questions:

- How well are existing partnerships to prevent crime working?

- What scope is there for further development?

Participants were also asked to consider the following issues:

- Developing community spirit to promote crime prevention locally.
- Encouraging participation.
- Links between An Garda Síochána and local communities.
- Promotion and maintenance of Neighbourhood Watch and Community Alert.
- Communication.
- Optimum use of resources.
- Structures for delivering crime prevention measures.

In this area the responses from the seminars have been grouped under four themes and the two core questions asked under each theme.

2.1   Partnership as a Model

How well are existing partnerships to prevent crime working?

There was a positive response overall to partnership as a crime prevention model. Some groups discussed in depth what is meant by partnership:

- A model bringing together statutory agencies, community and voluntary groups and the Gardaí.
- A collection of individuals who come together to share power rather than consult, to take some action.
- There must be buy-in from all agencies from top to bottom.
- Trust is a key element between all the parties. It needs to be nurtured and built over time.
- Those within the partnerships must be seen as being on an equal footing. Equality between agencies leads to deep problem-solving and real accountability.
- It must reach out to groups that are difficult to reach.
- Partnerships must have measurable achievements which can be evaluated.

- It provides a formal structure for the community to get involved with other agencies. It builds confidence of community leaders in their ability to deal with statutory agencies.

"It's important that they are not a 'talking shop' but show real results"

"It is a vehicle to build trust and confidence between all parties"

"When you share power you give away power and you have to compromise"

What scope is there for further development?

As a model of working together all the elements highlighted above need to be built upon. There were several other suggestions made to help improve partnership:

- We have a lot of experience of partnership. We should distil best practice and lessons learned to date. We should identify policies which work well elsewhere in the country and adapt them locally.
- A method should be developed to review partnership and measure its effectiveness.
- A framework is needed to analyse the issues partnerships address. This framework should incorporate the views of communities.
- Communities need to be made aware of all the fora in their areas and where to raise issues.
- Voluntary groups need to professionalise in order to work well within the partnership framework.
- More efforts should be made to engage with other groups through both informal and formal methods e.g. gay and lesbian groups, ethnic groups etc.
- There should be more consultation with youth groups.
- More resources should be given to partnerships, even small amounts.
- Schools should be involved more than they are at the moment.

"Partnership works very well already. There is no need to re-invent the wheel."

"They must have measureable achievements which can be evaluated."

2.2 Partnership Initiatives

How well are existing crime prevention partnerships working?

There are many examples of good practice of partnership across the country. It was suggested that success is dependent on the elements cited above as well as resources being provided, local commitment to being involved in crime prevention initiatives, and a mix of representatives in the groups (e.g. young and old). Relationships between the Gardaí and the community are also a critical success factor. Some examples of partnership working well were cited:

- Joint Policing Committees (JPCs): in come areas these are only starting up and in other areas they are more established. In general there is a positive feeling about JPCs as a way to work together. There are some concerns about how they should operate in future.
- Community Policing Fora: where these are in place they are seen as very innovative.
- Community alert schemes including Neighbourhood Watch, Campus Watch, Coastal Watch work very well in some areas but are dependent on leadership in the community.
- Community Warden Scheme, where it is in place, is working well.
- Some RAPID programmes are seen as very successful such as one where RAPID is involved in regeneration of local estates or another where, through RAPID, HSE volunteers provide support to parents of young children and teens.
- Drugs awareness campaigns and local drug projects are generally seen as working well.
- The Store Street partnership model for tackling anti-social behaviour is working well. It brings together the HSE and Homeless Agencies and has a holistic approach to anti-social behaviour arising out of drugs and drug addiction.

Areas mentioned which are not seen as working well were ASBOs and tenancy management under existing legislation.

What scope is there for further development?

Many of the initiatives mentioned previously need to be kept in place and built upon. Other suggested improvements included:

- JPCs: these need to have more resources and more clout. Their terms of reference should be extended and be more flexible. Two groups suggested they be more in line with the District Policing Partnerships in Northern Ireland.
- Some of the RAPID projects should be extended to non-RAPID areas e.g. the HSE scheme supporting parents of at-risk children.
- Community Forum: this should include more local people not just local leaders.
- Community Wardens: this scheme should be extended.

> *"Joint Policing Committees need to work at a level where they have an actual impact on local issues….groups sometimes operate at too high a level."*

2.3 An Garda Síochána

How well are existing partnerships to prevent crime working?

The relationship between the Gardaí and their local community is seen as fundamental to the success of the partnership model for crime prevention. Communication is at the heart of this relationship and so most groups discussed how vital good communication is between the Garda and their local community. The Community Garda model is viewed very positively. Other points raised were:

- The need to have a named link with Gardaí, who is readily available to respond to queries and meet the local communities.
- Engagement between the Gardaí and the community needs to be made as early as possible when new housing estates are established. They should also link with both homeowners and tenants.
- Quicker communication is needed between the community and their liaison Garda when trouble is brewing in a particular area.
- The Garda response to the business community is very important. Sometimes it is does not have the flexibility the business community expects.
- The visibility of the Gardaí in the community is important and is not as high as many would like it. It was acknowledged that there was often a wide geographical area to cover and the resources are not always provided to allow high visibility.

> *"We need to increase the number of community Garda and ensure continuity of this model across all Garda stations"*
>
> *"Some people in trouble don't know where to go or what help is available to them"*

What scope is there for further development?

Improvements in this area focused on extending the Community Garda model and improving communications (as mentioned above) with the various groups in the community. Other issues highlighted were:

- There should be more resources made available to raise Garda visibility.
- The issue of continuity of Garda liaison with the community should be addressed as this is so important for building up community relationships. These are jeopardised when individual Gardaí rotate roles/locations.
- There should be more communication with victims of crime and the community on where particular cases stand and what is happening.
- More school visits by Gardaí would be welcomed.

2.4   Other Issues

How well are existing partnerships working to prevent crime?

Other points were raised by individual groups around a variety of issues. These included:

- A fear in the community around increasing crime and drugs.
- New technology such as mobile phones is facilitating crime, especially around drugs.
- Need to understand more about crime and drugs in schools.
- A perception that crime is moving across the country and there are serious monitoring problems.
- There is an opportunity in current times and lack of resources for communities to solve problems themselves.

What scope is there for further development?

Other points raised by individual groups around a variety of suggested improvements. These included:

- We need to ensure continuity of resourcing for the future.
- There should be a database of rental properties for local areas so we are aware of people's movements. This practice works well on the continent.
- There is a great need for youth facilities and other state youth-funded programmes.
- The issue of community fear and intimidation need to be addressed in crime prevention.

- Schemes which provide house alarms for older people are needed and also schemes to provide personal alarms for people with special needs.
- One person asked: '*could this consultation process not be brought out to a wider public?* It was suggested that it be brought to those areas most affected by crime as '*most people here are agency people*'. Another speaker said that Dublin City Council is conducting a workshop on the White Paper which will involve those working in the wider community.

"Money is not the only thing going forward. We need to utilise what we have more effectively."

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3.   Preventing Involvement in Crime

Discussion in this area was guided by the following questions:

- How well are existing measures to prevent people becoming involved in crime working?

- What scope is there for further development?

Participants were also asked to consider the following issues:

- Role of early intervention and support to families at-risk in national crime strategy.
- Role/accountability of parents in tackling anti-social behaviour by their children.
- Targeting and co-ordinating measures to optimise results.
- Using and managing limited resources effectively.
- Evaluation of programmes and resource use.

This area was acknowledged by all groups to be a wide and complex one. Many factors contribute including community development, family support, education, poverty and drugs. Hence initiatives in all of these areas impact on preventing involvement in crime.

Some broad comments were made by the groups. A question raised by one group was how to measure the effectiveness of crime prevention. It is difficult to prove what you have prevented. It was also acknowledged by most groups that the majority of children do not want to get into trouble or become offenders. Care needs to be taken not to label children. One group suggested that high levels of inequality, especially between rich and poor, have to be tackled in society to prevent crime.

Other comments were made in specific areas as outlined under the headings below.

3.1   Youth services

How well are measures to prevent people becoming involved in crime working?

There are a wide variety of youth services provided across the country. Many of these have an impact on preventing involvement in crime. Specific initiatives are mentioned below as examples of good practice. Comments on the broader issue of how youth services operate as a whole are also made.

- Examples of specific successful initiatives that were mentioned included: Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs), Garda Youth Diversion Projects, Garda Special Projects (e.g. Knife Awareness and Drug Education in schools), Garda Youth Awards in Cork, Homework Clubs, Home School Community Liaison Scheme, Springboard Initiative, Incredible Years project in the Northeast, Young People's Facilities and Services Fund, the ISPCC work with families and children most at-risk, Head Start in Darndale, the Barnardos model, Peer Education Programme in Athlone, VEC funded youth projects, ION project in Sligo-Donegal, Neighbourhood Youth Project 2 (NYP2).
- One group agreed that we need a mix of generic programmes and specific services targeted to at-risk groups. However, another group suggested that perhaps there was 'over-intervention', maybe there are too many projects and not enough focus.
- There are too many Departments and agencies involved in youth services. We need an inter-agency approach that works.
- There are too many policies and not enough results. There is a big gap between policy and implementation.
- There is a need for longer-term planning and a more strategic approach.
- There is a lack of support for those over 16 years of age.
- There is a perception that funding is not focused in the right way, that it goes to mainstream groups not to the marginalised who really need it. Government should respond to needs identified by local communities rather than top down funding streams aimed at the wrong targets.
- There is difficulty targeting some individuals despite all the funding with a core group of offenders being ignored. One group called these the "un-clubbables". That group heard that the Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) deals with them.
- In terms of JLO system the question was posed: '*What about people who do not engage with JLO process or any initiatives – unravelling the good work of local communities. How do we impact on their criminal activities*?'.
- There are concerns regarding budget cuts in this area.

"Interagency working is going well at grass roots. Is the same happening at government level? We're not so sure."
"Not everyone plays ball games or wants to join clubs. How do we deal with the un-clubbables?"

"Treat children as children and don't criminalise them too early"

"The existing measures need to stay. The lights need to be kept on."

What scope is there for further development?

Suggested improvements in this area were:

- There should be better inter-agency co-operation and information sharing. Schools should be included in this inter-agency work.
- We need an overall Youth Service in Ireland.
- Current projects and initiatives should be examined. We need to evaluate each area for resources and outputs. The effectiveness of where funding is going should be examined. More resources are needed but we also should use what we have effectively. Successful projects should be identified.
- A bottom-up approach should be encouraged where funding is targeted at needs as identified by the local community.
- Crime prevention needs to be started at an earlier age. Some local evidence suggests we should place our emphasis on early years and parenting.
- Mentoring projects should be considered such as using the Probation Service and ex-offenders who may be appropriate to mentor youth away from crime.
- More local socialising opportunities need to be available to teens in particular, especially in rural areas. This needs to be more than GAA and sports clubs.
- There should be defined Youth Workers for individuals. Some Youth Workers have a lot of skills in this area and perhaps they could be used more effectively.
- A variety of approaches are needed to help prevent children entering the criminal system at an early age. We need to be careful of not criminalising them too early.
- We should invest more in research of young men. We should also act on research that has already been carried out.
- There should be a focus on young local leaders with potential not just on potential wrong-doers.

"Central government should take a lead from the bottom."

"Make sure that everyone is working together and that there is no overlap."

3.2   Schools

How well are measures to prevent people becoming involved in crime working?

Attending school and being educated was cited by all groups as essential to crime prevention. Particular points raised included:

- It is essential to keep children in school. The transition from primary to secondary school can be a big challenge.
- Parents need to be supported in valuing education and encouraging their children to stay in school.
- There is a need for more personal and social development of children from a younger age. This would mean teachers need training in this area.
- There is an issue with school attendance and a concern that this is no longer handled by the Gardaí. The new system of handling truancy is not seen as effective.
- There should be some focus on working with 6 to 10 year olds. Earlier intervention is seen to be better.
- If children leave school early they have no structured environment. More support is needed here.

What scope is there for further development?

Continuing in education as long as possible was seen by all as a fundamental component in preventing involvement in crime. Early and continuing intervention through programmes and support provided in primary and secondary school are also crucial. Suggested improvements in this area were:

- The school attendance system needs to be examined. It is not as effective now as it used to be when it was handled by the Gardaí.
- We need a new strategy for school retention.
- There should be some programmes provided on civics and responsible citizenship the whole way through from primary to secondary school.
- Teacher training programmes should be changed to emphasise not just academic education but also personal and social development.
- A programme is needed in primary school aimed at 6 to 10 year olds to empower them to say 'no'.
- More psychological support is needed at an earlier age in schools.
- Class sizes should be smaller.

3.3 Parental Support

How well are measures to prevent people becoming involved in crime working?

All groups discussed the role of parents and the need for parental responsibility for children in trouble. It was seen as a complex issue which is not easily solved and groups differed in their opinion about how to tackle it.

- The fining of parents as allowed under the Children Act is not working. There is no information available as to how often it has been implemented here but the literature elsewhere shows that this approach doesn't really work.
- Most groups discussed the issue of consequences for parents of children who commit offences. Some people felt strongly that consequences were required (e.g. deduction of social welfare payments or fines). Others felt this did not achieve anything and in fact, could have a detrimental effect on the child.
- All groups highlighted the need for parental support. Initiatives are needed in parenting skills and in encouraging parents to involve their children in education and structured activities. This support needs to be discreet.

"In my experience (as a Juvenile Liaison Officer) the vast majority of parents want the best for their kids. They want to be active and involved. Sometimes it's just a lack of capacity"

What scope is there for further development?

In general, groups suggested that more support and intervention were needed to help parents of children at risk. Suggested improvements in this area were:

- More parental support is needed. A more holistic approach should be taken seeing offenders as a member of a family within a community. There are examples of good practice out there which should be explored.
- Better conflict resolution and mediation services are needed for families and within the justice system. We need to move away from the adversarial system.
- Parents need to know the supports available in their area.
- Parents need to be engaged with to build responsibility and to involve themselves in the community and with youth projects.
- The issue of consequences for parents of children who commit offences needs to be examined. Some groups want to see

consequences or penalties enforced, others want other methods used.

3.4   An Garda Síochána

The relationship of the Gardaí with the community and with individual at-risk children and their families is critical. The various services and programmes provided by An Garda Síochána are also seen as an essential component of preventing involvement in crime. Several points were raised in this area.

How well are measures to prevent people becoming involved in crime working?

- Community Gardaí are seen as excellent support but there should be more of them.
- Gardaí need to interact within the community and not just in a negative way. Examples were cited of Gardaí getting involved in sports coaching, coming along to family days or being a member of a local partnership group and the positive impact it had. These types of initiatives seem to be left up to individual Gardaí. There needs to be commitment at a higher level to encourage and support this.
- Several groups felt Gardaí should be involved again in school attendance.
- Some Gardaí are more approachable than others. It was felt that the community development approach involves a particular skill set and perhaps more training is needed in this area.
- We need more visibility of Gardaí.
- We need to get away from the 'them' and 'us' relationship that sometimes exists between young people and the Gardaí.

"Every Garda needs to be a Community Garda"

What scope is there for further development?

Suggested improvements in this area were:

- There needs to be more emphasis by the Gardaí on relationship-building with the various stakeholders in the community e.g. young people, schools, elderly etc. They should be seen as readily accessible and available. It was suggested by one group that perhaps phone numbers should be provided like in some parts of the UK (e.g. Liverpool). This is also linked to the idea of higher visibility of the Gardaí in the local community which was raised by other groups.

- Garda training should involve more focus on social-worker type skills. This is not something that may come naturally to some recruits and it is essential for the Community Garda approach.
- The Gardaí should consider supporting a mentoring type programme where ex-offenders or other appropriate individuals discreetly mentor and support youths and families at-risk.
- We need more JLO type systems. They work very well and should be expanded.
- The community policing model is very well received and should be expanded.
- Gardaí should be encouraged to link with other initiatives within their community to raise their profile.
- Young people from marginalised groups should be encouraged to join An Garda Síochána. Perhaps we should consider positive discrimination for people from targeted communities.
- Gardaí should be used again to monitor school attendance.

"The community development approach is a specific skill base and specific training is needed for Gardaí"

"Help should always be there for those who need it and seek it. Phone numbers should be commonly available and known."

3.5 Community Development and Facilities

Having strong communities with good facilities was discussed and the following points were raised.

How well are measures to prevent people becoming involved in crime working?

- We know that young people who do not feel an involvement with the community tend to get involved with gangs. The strongest measure of prevention is to create sustainable communities. We need national planning around building strong communities.
- Preventing involvement in crime needs to be considered as an element of planning permission for the construction of new communities. Local planning needs to include playing fields, youth cafes, schools, health centres etc.

"Prevention often means creating a sense of involvement for young people with something positive rather than allowing them to drift into something negative."

"We don't have a good track record of investment in facilities and planning. A patch of grass is not a facility."

What scope is there for further development?

Suggested improvements in this area were:

- We need national planning around building strong communities.
- Local planning of houses and infrastructure needs to incorporate prevention of crime initiatives. Developments should not be built without playing facilities, community centres etc.
- Parents need to be encouraged to help run any community facilities that are built.

4.   Reducing Re-Offending

Discussion in this area was guided by the following questions:

- How well are existing measures to reduce re-offending working?

- What scope is there for further development?

Participants were also asked to consider the following issues:
- Give an example of how an initiative to reduce re-offending is working well in this region; why is it working well?; what hinders it from working better? Is there any other initiative which you think would help to reduce re-offending?
- Priorities for reducing re-offending.
- Community-based sanctions.
- Role of communities in the operation of community sanctions
- Reintegration of ex-prisoners into society .
- In a contracting labour market measures which might help ex-offenders get a job and stop them from re-offending?
- Steps to be taken to assist ex-offenders in desisting from further offending.

The discussion focused on examples of initiatives that are currently in place and whether these are effective in reducing re-offending. In general, the services provided are seen as fragmented and working in isolation. The provision of services is seen as piecemeal; while some services are very good there are gaps elsewhere.

Reducing Re-Offending will be discussed using five themes under the headings below.

4.1 Probation/Prison Initiatives

How well are existing measures to reduce re-offending working?

- The Probation Service plays an instrumental and vital service in reducing re-offending. It was felt that community, Gardaí and the Probation Service are the 3 pillars of crime reduction.
- Linkage, a service set up by the Probation Service and Business in the Community to tackle re-offending through sustainable employment was seen as very positive. Referrals are made through the Probation Service and working with people as young as 14 upwards it can provide employment in the community for offenders.
- New mentoring programme being piloted (Business in the Community Ireland) where mentors work in prisons looking at ex-offenders' welfare needs, housing etc. It seeks to mentor prisoners

back into the community from the moment they leave prison. This is seen as filling a gap which no other service is filling. Perceived as an effective programme.

- Probation Service (mostly in the community) and Irish Prison Service work together to provide a degree of integration for offenders leaving prison (Integrated Sentence Mgt – ISM).
- PALL (Probation and Linkage Limerick) initiative in Limerick, a training and employment initiative, aimed at over 18s. Training and employment, labour market focused. Started in 2008, in its infancy but working well so far.
- Restorative Justice: where individuals face the consequence of their actions towards victims. It is working but needs to tie in better with victim support initiatives.
- Cork Alliance Project, a Probation-funded project that deals with ex-offenders in transition from custody to community to give support and prevent re-offending. This works well.
- There is a good programme in Athlone called "Stepping Out" for offenders in the community geared towards educational and personal development. Participants must be drug free.
- It was suggested that first offence should have some kind of immediate consequences, not criminalised but some kind of community sanctions. Even at a very young age there should be consequences.
- The way that the prison system works by its very nature does not help prisoners as it does not rehabilitate.
- Probation-funded project for 16-18 year olds – working well. Additional resources needed to cover a wider area.
- Restorative element of cautioning is working well.
- Release from prison is seen as chaotic, there is no pre-release planning.
- Bridge Project is alternative to custody. Clients are not there on a voluntary basis. There are issues with getting them to cooperate.
- Equipping ex-prisoners with basic skills, literacy etc is very important to assist their rehabilitation. Opportunity to speak with someone such as a Probation Officer gives prisoners the chance to reflect on their lives and crimes.
- Application of bail laws is not working well, as convicted prisoners are committing serious crimes when out on bail. Laws on this issue need to be reviewed.
- It was acknowledged that the Probation Service has become more scientific. It is using psychometric testing and basing its work on international best practice. There is now more joint working especially with the Gardaí. 35% of Probation Service funding is spent on funding 60+ community based projects. There are some good examples of joint working.
- It needs to be recognised that why people offend is complex. '*What are they coming out to? Stable housing? Debts?*' An effective system has to be tailored to the individual.

"We need to change our attitude towards offenders. If we call them scumbags they will be scumbags. Everyone can develop as a human being"

"It can be very frustrating when convicted offenders are released quickly due to prison over-crowding."

"We need joint working and seamless transitions"

What scope is there for further development?

- Most locations felt that there needs to be more half-way houses for offenders. It was suggested that there be some variety in these, some which are drugs free and some which allow some drug use. This could help prevent re-offending.
- Restorative justice is not used enough. Seeing impact of crime has real potential to be rolled out more, especially for young people. Currently it is done in an informal way for kids. It needs to be nationwide for adults as well. It is not rolled out across the country yet.
- One location suggested that National Service should be looked at as an alternative to custody.
- Some locations referred to an overarching context in relation to youth and prisoners. A continuum of care is needed. Huge investments are made while individuals are in custodial care but once released into the community there are no prospects and support, which is a huge cause of re-offending.
- Criminal record: even for minor offences a criminal record stays with individuals for the rest of their lives- this is not helpful for reintegration into society. There may be exceptions to that – e.g., sex offenders etc –but there is no need to label minor crime offenders for their lives and records should be expunged. Restorative projects needed instead of labelling people.
- One location suggested that the action needed is closer collaboration between the Probation Service and the community. Develop personal development plans for those who go through prison, in conjunction with community groups.
- Create a well developed mentoring programme- enhance existing ones and up-skill more individuals to be involved.
- It was suggested by two locations that homelessness and mental health issues are very significant issues for people coming out of prison.
- Structured pre-release programmes need to be considered as it felt that they work for the offender and victim.
- One location felt that the Dept of Justice is not on board to listening to possibilities of structured pre-release programme. They suggested that policy needs to change in the Dept for this to happen.

- Greater use should be made of restorative justice post prison release with young offenders. It could be used in some violent crime situations but would not work well for crimes like rape and murder.
- A Violent Offenders Register, particularly for manslaughter cases, may have value.
- More measures needed within prisons - there are opportunities for improvement e.g. psychological services, rehabilitation, needle exchange programmes.
- There is a need for rehabilitation within custody to assist in reducing re-offending. Wheatfield was a good model to begin with but this has been undermined by overcrowding.
- Sentencing Policy: release to be done in a managed way. There needs to be a planned release policy and pre-release planning.
- Some locations said that to reduce re-offending you need to work in a holistic way with the individual's motivation, their personal well-being and their mental health. Offenders need to come out of prison with basic literacy and numeracy skills.

"For some people who have been in jail their biggest fear was coming out. They had nowhere to go, families who might not want them, no support. I met someone who wanted to go back into jail, he had nowhere to go."

"Unless sanctions really affect individuals, e.g., by affecting their social security/welfare, their tax benefits etc. unless they feel real pain, there is no sanction against offending/re-offending. At the moment people pick the fine option, and then don't pay it, knowing they'll be sent to prison but will be out of prison in a very short timeframe due to over-crowding."

4.2   Garda Youth Diversion Programme (GYDP)

How well are existing measures to reduce re-offending working?

- It is seen as primary avenue to encourage youths to take responsibility for their actions and enhance their involvement in the community.
- Formal and informal cautions work very well. The programme works with younger people 10 to 18 specifically to reduce offending, and works to support family values.
- 85% of youth offending is dealt with through this programme.
- There are concerns about whether or not the GYDPs are equipped to deal with substance abuse issues e.g. how is a drug problem in a young person's life identified and responded to?
- Example was given of an under-18 drug rehabilitation centre in Kildare. Issue in ensuring young people are attending as there are no sanctions in place to force young people to take part.

- System dealing with young offenders is fragmented GYDP, Young People's Probation, Youth Projects etc. Who is best placed to deal with this work? Look at UK projects.
- Irish Youth Justice Service will now administer funding to the GYDPs. Garda JLOs are the key contact to refer the young person.
- Garda Youth Diversion Programme only operates for those under the age of 18 – there should be a continuation for over 18s and follow on for those most at risk over 18.
- Youth justice: a lot of resources put into 16-18 age group but when youth reach 18 there needs to be continuance of care, particularly in relation to education so that they become a part of society.
- Resources quite limited for children who come before the courts – and the number of children who can be helped is quite small. Particularly need mentoring for that age group (i.e. children).
- There is no follow up for those young children most at risk - i.e., no means exist to follow up with kids in care.
- Addiction: a high level of offending related to addiction. It was felt that nowhere near enough money invested in tackling this. People are aware that there is a deficit in funding.
- The example was given of Youth Action Programme Sligo (YAP) which identifies reasons behind offending and helps them to change their behaviour.
- Children Act 2001 Juvenile Diversion Programme, evidence shows that 86% do not re-offend.
- VECs fund a range of activities at second level, designed to reduce the risk of offending amongst young people.

"There is no follow up for those young children most at risk - i.e., no means exist to follow up with kids in care."

"Services need to be available in a timely way."

What scope is there for further development?

- Children Act 2001:- Supervision orders which enable parenting should be used to full potential.
- There was some discussion around re-engagement in education as evidence shows that early school leavers are most at risk.
- The use of alcohol and drugs by young people is seen as a major issue in society so '*how should we work with this*'?
- It was suggested that the Dept of Justice should have its own drugs strategy and that there should be multiple drugs strategies which then feed into a national strategy.
- Others suggested that there should be A Drug and Alcohol Strategy rather than separate strategies. For example, '*Gardaí have drugs section but perhaps should be drugs and alcohol*'. This was seen as

so important, that it needs to be integrated from top to bottom- Dept, Gardaí, etc.

- In relation to Garda Youth Diversion Programmes, it was felt that reparation and restorative justice programmes are needed within the diversion project. It was suggested that reparations system like in the UK could be developed within diversion projects, integrated into their work and for young people.

- One location suggested that the voluntary aspects of youth programmes are an issue (e.g. Garda Juvenile Diversion programmes) and are sometimes seen as 'soft' so not as effective since the young offenders don't have take them up.

- Roles need to be defined and a balance found between developing the relationship with young people but then having to be arresting officers on occasion - this sends mixed/confusing messages to the young people -trust built up is then taken away through enforcement actions.

- Community courts were suggested as a way of responding to young people offending.

- Youth Offending Teams, in operation in the UK, could be a useful model to investigate further.

- It was suggested that Gardaí be involved in the area of truancy, it worked well when they were involved.

- Counselling can be used as another tool in tackling re-offending. Increase counselling to school and families.

- Encourage a larger role for parents in Garda Youth Diversion Projects- their involvement could be compulsory. Parents need to take more responsibility for their children.

- Inter-generational approach is needed especially in areas where education is not valued. Education is critical to development of youth and getting employment plus integration into society. It was suggested that there should be an increase in the number of Educational Welfare Officers.

"Most initiatives are focused on children and not on supporting the parents. Sometimes it would be better to work with parents whose children are involved in crime as they need to play a stronger role in their children's reintegration into society."

4.3 Understanding Crime/Re-offending

How well are existing measures to reduce re-offending working?

Some locations started with an exploration of what causes one to offend in the first place.

- Not enough emphasis is placed on understanding the motivation for offending. Social disadvantage is one reason though it may not be the only reason for re-offending.
- Looking at the broader context, a UCD study shows high rates of re-offending for particular types of low-level crimes. There are questions about how we actually measure re-offending, what the figures are based on. Are they complete?
- Some of the positive measures to reduce re-offending involve intensive services which need a lot of resources (e.g. mentoring). The successful measures are often dependent on the personalities involved.
- The approaches to reducing re-offending need to be nuanced. Much of it needs to be based on the 'lifecycle' of the offender in terms of what stage they are at in their life. They will view the organisation and services provided differently if they are a first time offender or a multiple time offender. The services need to recognise this.
  - Other elements impact on re-offending, not just the specific measures already put in place. Housing services, drug treatment services and social welfare services all play a big part.

"Cross-departmental working is needed"

"Propensity to offend is likely to grow due to current social/economic issues"

What scope is there for further development?

- There is a need for more research to more fully understand what draws people back into re-offending. Barnardos have produced a report "Written Out, Written Off" which shows that in the US 80% of offenders had not finished school. Many of them had educational and behavioural problems, intellectual disabilities and high levels of depression and addiction. More research is needed.
- Prison is not seen as a very cost effective way of dealing with reform of individuals – '*many people imprisoned are not violent offenders.*' There needs to be a joint approach to deal with those who have committed crimes. Better '*link in*' with key workers on release from prison.

- Instead of longer sentence a detention and supervision order can be used.
  - Add a training element to this for long-term development.
  - Less detention, more personal development.
  - Community needs to be involved.
- It was suggested that holistic approaches and interagency working are needed. '*It's not just housing or education or welfare or self-worth etc'*. Could we incorporate it all in to one programme through the whole journey, both in and out of prison with particular emphasis on addressing the crime they have committed?

4.4 Community Issues

How well are existing measures to reduce re-offending working?

- Strengthening Families programme is working very well but could be enhanced.
- Community Garda role is seen as very important in reducing re-offending. While it needs to be continued and expanded on, the approach taken needs to be standardised as it varies from area to area as to whether there is a Community Garda and how effectively it works.
- Community Service in place of custodial sentence works well but some consider it is not used enough. Prison sentences have a negative impact on offenders and they come out a different person. Diverting the offenders to Community Service is seen as a good option.
- Community Service should be actively promoted and it's visibility raised, *"but not by using orange jumpsuits"*. It was felt that there is a need to promote the positive side of it. Some suggested that it doesn't have to be in the offender's own community.
- Youth diversion programme is seen as very successful. There is community support for this. They are very over-stretched though.
- ASBOs are seen as very labour intensive and time consuming. Questions about their effectiveness were raised and some participants felt that they do not work.
- Restorative Justice Services such as in Nenagh and Tallaght, are seen as very successful and could be more widely used.

> *"There is a lot to be said for young people not going to jail at all'. They come after two months with a 'hard man' attitude and then have to live up to that."*
>
> *"Poverty leads to criminal sentence and jail. White collar crime goes nowhere."*
>
> *'It's a shame we have to wait for a crisis before we address issues- for example in Limerick where there is now an agency to address a social/economic problem area'.*

4.5   Integrated Approach

How well are existing measures to reduce re-offending working?

- Some locations said that management of offenders cannot be remit of just one agency- cross agency approach is needed and key to that is information sharing. Good decisions dependent on good information.
- National Protocols around information sharing are needed. Have to work within area of data protection.
- One location felt that the first incident of crime has a very strong influence and should be a prime area for interagency focus (HSE, Gardaí, school). There should be assigned co-ordinators in each Department who work with their opposites in other Departments.
- One location felt that some of this integration is happening at a local level e.g. in Ballymun between the Gardaí, the HSE and the Probation Services. '*But this is only as good as the people the ground. When people move this can be lost*.'
- There is lots of networking happening on the ground but the structures are too rigid. There is no culture of sharing information e.g. schools sharing information with the health services.

> *"Trust and goodwill is necessary between agencies"*
>
> *"Interagency approach works best, especially with young people re-offending"*

What scope is there for further development?

- Joint working between groups- some are very good at what they do but the gaps in between need to be tackled. It was considered very important to see more integration between Health Service, Justice and Education so that at risk children can be identified earlier even before they commit any offence.
- This was seen is critical point in connection between justice system and policy system, particularly social/health/education. Justice picks up pieces left over from other areas of responsibility – engagement with HSE, Social Welfare etc -an interagency perspective necessary.
- Criminal Justice 3rd Sector might help amalgamate all the disjointed agencies that are working at the moment, work more fluidly. The Linkage service is working on a paper on the criminal justice 3rd Sector and improving communication between the various agencies.

Next Steps

The White Paper on Crime consultation process, which commenced with this exercise, will be continued over a series of further discussion documents. The next document will deal with 'Criminal Sanctions' and is due for release in early 2010. Other subjects for future discussion documents include organised and 'non-street' crime, as well as the relationship between members of the public and criminal justice system.

The public consultation process will incorporate invitations for written submissions as well as an additional round of regional seminars. These will be held at a further range of locations so that the overall process will have achieved a broad geographic reach by its conclusion.

Submissions on any aspect of the process are welcome at any point and can be sent by post or email to:

<div align="center">

White Paper on Crime Unit,
Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform,
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Dublin 2.

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If making a submission, please state if the views expressed are personal or are being made on behalf of an organisation. If views of an organisation are being submitted, it should be made clear which organisation is represented.

Submissions may be subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts and may be published. Please indicate if you would prefer your submission to remain confidential.