

YOUNG PEOPLE, PARENTING AND YOUTH JUSTICE

JOHN COLEMAN



POLICY BACKGROUND

- JOHN GRAHAM AND BEN BOWLING STUDY 1996
- NEW LABOUR GOVERNMENT 1997
- CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998
- FIRST INTRODUCTION OF PARENTING ORDER
- ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003
- EVOLVING CHANGES: Free-standing orders; contracts; non-attendance at school

PARENTING BACKGROUND

- STUDIES SHOW THAT FAMILY RISK FACTORS ARE KEY ANTECEDENTS OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR
- POOR PARENTAL SUPERVISION AND MONITORING
- FAMILY CONFLICT
- HARSH, INCONSISTENT DISCIPLINE
- A FAMILY HISTORY OF CRIMINALITY

SOME QUESTIONS

- WHAT ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS?
- POVERTY AND DEPRIVATION
- THE ROLE OF THE PEER GROUP
- WHAT WE NOW KNOW ABOUT MONITORING
- PARENTS' OWN CIRCUMSTANCES – E.G. MENTAL HEALTH

SOME MORE QUESTIONS

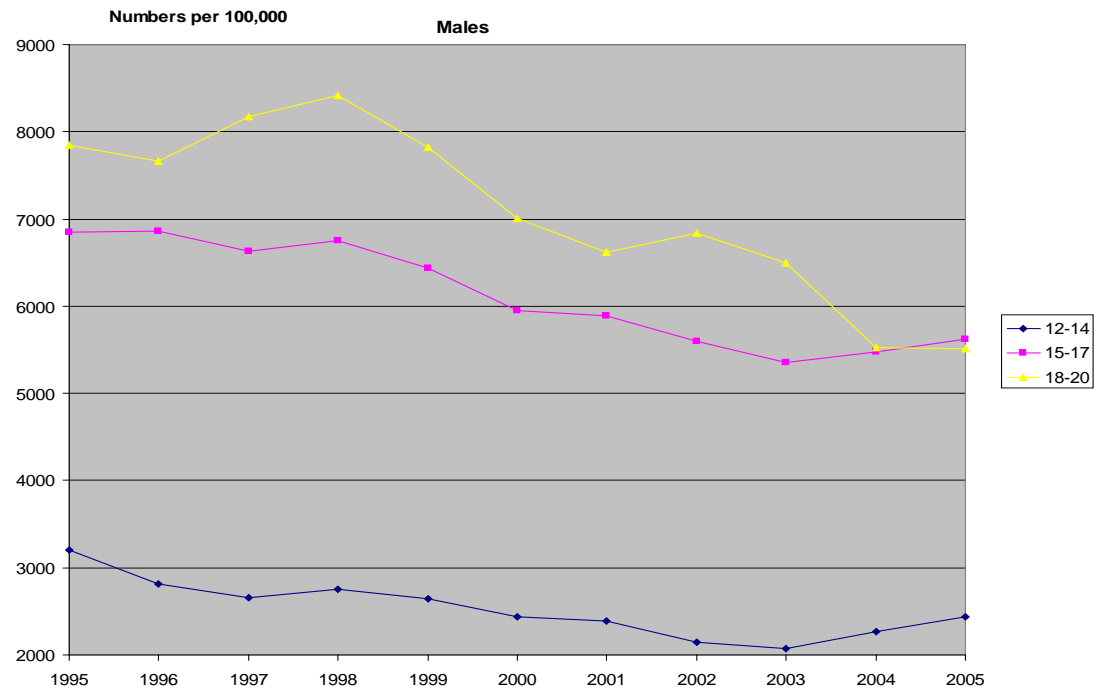
- CAN WE TALK OF “BAD” OR “GOOD” PARENTING?
- LEAVING THIS ASIDE, CAN WE BE SURE THAT EFFECTIVE PARENTING WILL LEAD TO A REDUCTION IN YOUTH CRIME?

YOUTH CRIME IN BRITAIN

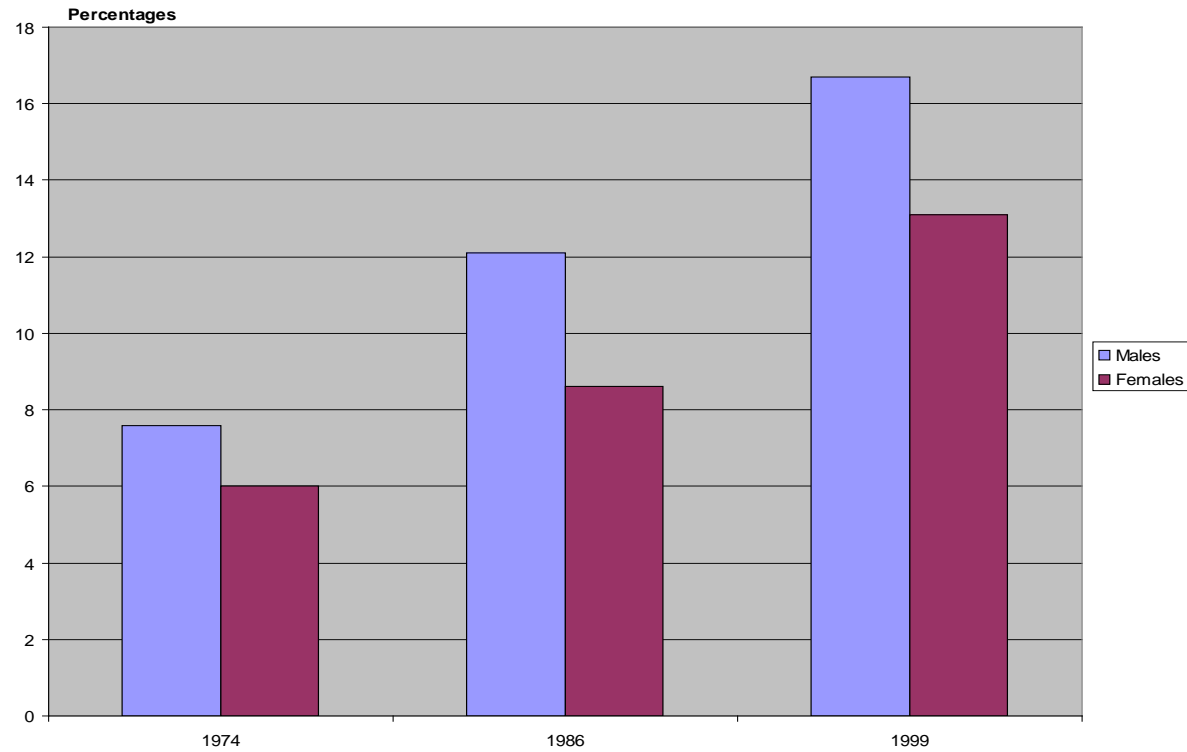
- IT LOOKS AS IF YOUTH CRIME AMONG YOUNG MEN IS COMING DOWN
- DESPITE A RANGE OF SENTENCES AVAILABLE, USE OF CUSTODY IS INCREASING
- TIME TRENDS IN ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

TRENDS IN MALE YOUTH CRIME

Persons found guilty of, or cautioned for, indictable offences per 100,000 population, by gender and age group, in England and Wales, 1995-2005



CHANGES IN ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR OVER TIME



DIFFICULTIES IN PARENTING TEENAGERS

- HOW MUCH AUTHORITY DO PARENTS HAVE?
- WHAT ABOUT AGE CHANGES – UP TO WHAT AGE CAN PARENTS HAVE THE FINAL SAY?
- FAMILY STRUCTURE – MORE FLUID FAMILIES
- SOCIAL CHANGES – EDUCATION, WORK
- WHAT IS DISCIPLINE IN THIS AGE GROUP?
- DO TEENAGERS INHABIT DIFFERENT WORLDS?

WHAT IS IT LIKE BEING A TEENAGER?

- IF YOU ARE LIVING IN POVERTY, DEPRIVATION
- NOT MUCH ON OFFER AT SCHOOL – FAILING IS NO GOOD FOR SELF-ESTEEM
- PRESSURE FROM PEERS
- ALCOHOL, DRUGS, AND OTHER TEMPTATIONS
- WHERE IS SUPPORT, STRUCTURE, GUIDANCE, AND INDEED OPPORTUNITY?

IS THERE A MUDDLE?

- ARE WE MUDDLING UP AN OBVIOUS GOOD – PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR PARENTS – WITH A TOTALLY DIFFERENT AIM: REDUCING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR?
- AND THEN BIG QUESTION - VOLUNTARY VERSUS COMPULSORY?

AIMS OF INTERVENTIONS

- DEALING WITH CONFLICT AND CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR
- CONSTRUCTIVE SUPERVISION AND MONITORING
- BOUNDARIES AND GROUND RULES
- COMMUNICATION AND NEGOTIATION SKILLS
- REDUCING FAMILY CONFLICT

TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS

- FAMILY THERAPY
- GROUP-BASED PROGRAMMES
- COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL PROGRAMMES
- PARENT MENTORS
- PARENT ADVISORS

PROBLEMS WITH INTERVENTIONS

- ENGAGING PARENTS
- PRIORITIES FOR PARENTS
- TOO LITTLE TOO LATE
- WHAT HAPPENS TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHILE THIS IS GOING ON?
- FATHERS
- CULTURE AND ETHNICITY

INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE IN PARENTING PROGRAMMES

- PARALLEL PROGRAMMES
- FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING
- FAMILY SKILLS TRAINING
- CONCLUSIONS – STAFFING, ATTENDANCE, PARENTS WANTING SPACE, HAVE TO HAVE COMMITMENT TO WORKING WITH WHOLE FAMILY.

EVALUATION

- RELATIVELY LITTLE AVAILABLE
- EARLY STUDIES SHOWED PARENTS VERY POSITIVE
- MIXED GROUPS GOOD
- PARENTS SAID – WHY DID WE NOT GET THIS EARLIER?
- GROUPS NOT RIGHT FOR ALL PARENTS

RECENT STUDY OF COMPULSORY ORDERS

- RARE CASES OF PARENTAL NEGLECT ARE USED TO JUSTIFY THE “BLAME” CULTURE
- THE PROBLEM OF “SPOILED IDENTITIES”
- ARGUMENT OF DOUBLE-BIND – EITHER GO ON COURSE, ADMIT YOU WERE BAD PARENT, OR REFUSE, AND GET CRIMINALISED

PARENTS' RESPONSES

- WHO KNOWS WHAT IS BEST ANYWAY?
WHAT IS “GOOD” PARENTING?
- THE “EXPERT” HAS NO CLUE WHAT MY
CIRCUMSTANCES ARE
- FINE TO HAVE A CHAT, BUT HAS NO
IMPACT ON MY SON
- RESISTANCE TO ACCEPTING BLAME

THREE MAJOR ISSUES

- CAN A SHORT INTERVENTION CHANGE PARENTAL BEHAVIOUR?
- ARE SUCH INTERVENTIONS LIKELY TO REDUCE YOUTH CRIME?
- WHAT ABOUT CIVIL LIBERTIES?
- HOW FAR CAN THE STATE GO IN INTERVENING IN FAMILY LIFE?