

Independent Commission seeks blueprint for an effective and sustainable response to youth crime

A major new inquiry has been launched to carry out a fundamental re-examination of the way that society responds to offending and other troublesome behaviour by children and young people.

The Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Antisocial Behaviour is chaired by a distinguished corporate lawyer, **Anthony Salz**, and organized by the Police Foundation, an independent charity. Funding for the inquiry is being provided by the Nuffield Foundation.

The Commission's aim is to identify consistent principles for dealing fairly and proportionately with antisocial behaviour and offending that will also help to minimise the harm that children and young people cause to the community and themselves.

These will guide its blueprint for sustainable reforms to relevant children's services in England and Wales, including the youth justice system. Adopting a strategic approach, the Commission will seek to produce a more effective, humane and coherent approach to youth crime that is based on the best-available evidence from research and other sources.

Anthony Salz, Executive Vice-Chairman of the investment bank N. & M Rothschild, formerly senior partner at the international commercial law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and a former Vice-Chair of the BBC Board of Governors, said: "Our starting point is the serious concerns that are widely expressed about antisocial behaviour and crime among children and young people and the way we respond. The Commission and our independent funder are convinced that the time is right for a careful, strategic review of the available evidence that takes us back to first principles to decide how best we can reform youth justice and improve prevention services in the interests of all concerned.

"We will be looking for more sustainable, more effective and fairer ways of dealing with behaviour issues that affect our communities, sometimes as victims of crime and antisocial behaviour – many young people among them – or as taxpayers picking up the bill for our existing, increasingly expensive system."

The members of the Commission, which is due to report in the summer of 2010, are:

- **Derrick Anderson**, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Lambeth
- **Ruth Ibegbuna**, leader of Manchester's award-winning RECLAIM youth crime prevention project and Director of Learning and Community at the Urbis exhibition centre
- **Prof. Paul Johnson**, Research Fellow at the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Senior Associate at Frontier Economics
- **Sir Ken Macdonald QC**, Director of Public Prosecutions from 2003 to 2008
- **Ian McPherson**, Chief Constable of Norfolk who leads on children and young people issues for the Association of Chief Police Officers
- **Sarah Nathan**, former Editor of Channel 4 News and a member of the Judicial Appointments Committee
- **Angela Neustatter**, journalist and author of *Locked in – Locked Out* describing the experiences of young offenders
- **Prof David J. Smith**, Honorary Professor Criminology at the University of Edinburgh
- **Mike Thomas**, Head of West Sussex Youth Offending Services and Chair of the Association of Youth Offending Team Managers
- **Sir David Varney**, former Chair of HM Revenue and Customs and the Prime Minister's Adviser on Public Service Transformation
- **Andrew Webb**, Corporate Director, Children and Young People, for Stockport and policy lead on youth offending for the Association of Directors of Children's Services.

The Commission's evidence-gathering activities will include an examination by leading experts of international research on adolescent development, prevention of youth crime and antisocial behaviour and different approaches to youth justice. Fact-finding visits to relevant organisations and institutions will be combined with consultations with stakeholders, including young people themselves.

John Graham, Director of the Police Foundation, which is organising the inquiry, said: "Amid widespread public concern about threatening, violent and antisocial behaviour by young people, there is a danger of responses that are driven by instinct rather than evidence. The Commission's independence and its distinguished membership mean it is exceptionally well-qualified to reflect calmly on the fundamental principles that should underpin a more thoughtful response to children and young people whose behaviour is troublesome."

Further information about the **Independent Commission on Youth Crime and Antisocial Behaviour** can be found on its website www.youthcrimecommission.org.uk.