



research about crime and offending at NFER



NFER is Britain's largest independent educational research body and is responsible for a wide portfolio of work commissioned by a comprehensive range of clients. NFER is well placed and well suited to delivering research about [crime and offending](#). This leaflet demonstrates our expertise and what we offer, and gives some examples of our work in this area. This profile, coupled with NFER's longstanding research expertise in the area of education, schools, local authorities and Children's Services, demonstrates our distinctive perspective and a unique research and evaluation service.

Our experience and expertise

Research projects are customised to our clients' needs and are methodologically diverse. We have [experienced and highly qualified staff](#) and are able to draw on extensive research techniques and dedicated support services to ensure the quality and validity of all projects undertaken. All staff have child protection and safeguarding training and are CRB checked.

At NFER we have:

- a pedigree of research into vulnerability as a cause and effect of offending, disaffection and disengagement from learning, and young offenders and juvenile crime
- a longstanding reputation, and extensive portfolio of work, with schools, local authorities, Children's Services and children's trusts including research on integrated, multi-agency services

- experience of conducting research with a wide range of crime and justice professionals
- skills in negotiating access to a range of settings including the secure estate (adult and juvenile) and in the community
- expertise in engaging vulnerable and hard to reach groups in research
- highly developed skills in interviewing young and adult offenders and other vulnerable groups
- a dedicated team of research and administration staff in the area of crime and offending.

NFER carries out research and evaluation studies with both young and adult offenders, those 'at risk of offending' and with professionals who work with offenders and 'at risk' groups including the police, prison/probation staff, schools/colleges, health services, housing and resettlement staff, magistrates and third sector organisations etc.

We help clients to:

- understand local needs
- find out what works
- evaluate initiatives and programmes
- demonstrate impact on outcomes and distance travelled
- highlight gaps and areas for development
- showcase good practice.

Examples of our work

Perceptions of youth crime

Strategies to improve perceptions of young people and reduce the fear of youth crime and anti-social behaviour (NFER's research development fund, 2010). This qualitative study investigated the approaches being taken by local authorities and their partners to improve how young people are perceived, especially in relation to youth crime and anti-social behaviour. The study also looked at the challenges and benefits of activities to improve public perceptions about young people, and the methods used to measure the impact of these activities.

An investigation of youth crime and public perceptions (LGA, 2008). A literature review and accompanying comparative statistical analysis of the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey and Youth Justice Board annual offending data 2005–6.

A study of the perceptions of young people in custody (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006). This qualitative study focussed on how young people within the secure estate perceived their entitlements. It included their views on public and care services, as well as education and training provision.



Young people who offend or are at risk of offending

Evaluation of the Children in Trouble projects (LGA, 2010). The Children in Trouble programme pilot set out to encourage, develop and showcase different approaches to reducing the use of custodial sentences. This study documented the programme's achievements and the challenges for its four pilot projects through interviews with project staff, key partners and young people.

Analysis of YOT Inspection Reports (LGA, Ongoing). This project aims to provide an analysis of the overall performance of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) in England. Quantitative and qualitative information on YOTs' performance in relation to safeguarding and public protection will be extracted from a sample of YOT inspection reports conducted between 2006 and 2008 and analysed.

Review of preventative work in schools and other educational settings to address domestic violence (Welsh Assembly Government, Forthcoming). This project maps current domestic abuse prevention initiatives across Wales to ascertain the effective elements of such programmes. The project incorporates a documentation review, data collection via electronic proforma and interviews with a range of stakeholders. A database of domestic abuse interventions will be produced along with a set of recommendations for future policy and practice.

The role of police officers in schools (NFER's research development fund, Forthcoming). This study is auditing the range of ways in which police are currently working with schools in England. It uses a literature review, telephone interviews with key stakeholders, and case-studies in schools to examine the effectiveness of the role, and the key challenges and factors for success.

An Evaluation of Fast Track to Prosecution (DfES, 2004). The Fast Track to Prosecution framework was created to ensure a faster approach to the implementation of intervention strategies for tackling school non-attendance. Evidence on the processes and effectiveness of the Fast Track programme was obtained through face-to-face interviews, a computerised case-tracking system for logging the outcomes of Fast Track cases and analysis of documents relating to Fast Track implementation.

Offender Learning and Skills

Evaluation of the Offender Learning And Skills Service (OLASS) (including the evaluation of prison libraries), for the DfES (Offender Learning and Skills Unit, 2006). The overarching aim of the evaluation was to investigate the implementation phase of OLASS, including any challenges encountered and solutions adopted. Visits and telephone interviews were conducted with representatives from a range of agencies.

Evaluation of the Safe Ground Family Relationships and Parenting Programme (in prisons) (Safe Ground, 2002). This study used interviews, observations and questionnaires to evaluate the impact of parenting courses provided to offenders and their families in two prisons.

Citizenship and Basic/Key Skills Programme for Young Offenders (The Institute for Citizenship, 2001). This qualitative project was undertaken in four case-study Young Offender Institutions (YOIs) involving education managers, course tutors, and young people. The study evaluated the efficacy of basic skills and citizenship materials written for specific use in YOIs.

Our complete research service

We can provide:

- a wide range of research techniques and methodologies, including online surveys and evaluations
- a survey and data collection service for large scale questionnaire surveys, test trialling and data-collection exercises
- highly experienced statisticians with expertise in all types of statistical analysis techniques
- specialist literature searching service
- dedicated service (EMIE) for local authorities on Children's Services and education issues, including engaging them in research
- information unit specialising in international education systems and policy
- a range of publishing, web and marketing services aimed at letting people know about the results of research.

More information

More details about our work in crime and offending are available on our website at www.nfer.ac.uk

For more information, please contact Shona MacLeod at NFER: s.macleod@nfer.ac.uk

