

London schools tackle youth crime

29th October 2008

London schools and agencies tackling youth crime will gather at the Tower of London with Minister for London, Rt Hon Tony McNulty MP on 5th November to launch an innovative programme that puts schools at the heart of crime reduction, helping young people to feel safer in their communities.

Spearheaded by the London Youth Crime Prevention Board (LYCPB), the *London Schools Programme for Safety and Cohesion* is led by a coalition of agencies comprising the Government Office for London, the Met, Youth Justice Board, London Councils and National Strategies. It is a key part of the LYCPB action plan to stem the flow of young Londoners into the criminal justice system.

The Minister, who will be speaking at the event, said

"I applaud the work of LYCPB and am pleased to see so many agencies working together to defeat youth crime. I know we can draw on London's excellent work in supporting authorities nationally to improve their performance."

The schools programme will build safety and crime prevention measures into the culture of schools, by:

- thoroughly assessing what they are doing to keep pupils safe and out of trouble;
- working in close partnership with police, relevant local authority agencies such as youth offending teams, children's services and third sector agencies; and
- engaging with pupils and parents, particularly pupils at risk of involvement in youth crime as victims or offenders.

Pilots in 27 schools, a combination of primary, secondary and faith schools, pupil referral units and academies from inner and outer London, are currently underway. The full programme will be rolled out across London in early 2009.

The schools initiative links closely to a recently announced project, led by London Councils, securing £525,000 from the government to overhaul pupil referral units. This project is also a key part of the LYCPB action plan and shows how its sharp focus on partnership work is already reaping benefits.

November's launch event will bring together 40 London agencies to contribute to the development of the programme and see early findings from the pilots. Young people involved in pilots will also attend and have fed into future planning for the programme, raising key issues including being able to report crime anonymously and hearing from those with 'real experiences'.

Young attendees will also have the opportunity to work with an education team from the Royal Armouries, who are committed to tackling conflict in communities and, in partnership with Historic Royal Palaces, have provided the impressive Tower venue.



Lord Victor Adebowale (Chair of the London Youth Crime Prevention Board) who will make the event's keynote speech, said

"The schools programme exists because scared kids don't learn and kids that don't learn are available to do other things including crime. If we want to prevent youth crime, we must make every school a safer school. That is what the schools programme is designed to achieve."

Ian Clement, Deputy Mayor of London for Government Relations and member of LYCPB, also speaking at the event, added,

"There are strong links between school truancy, exclusions and youth crime. The Mayor currently consulting on a range of proposals to help tackle youth crime and school involvement is a key part of this. The London Schools Programme will help identify vulnerable children from early age, so that appropriate action can be taken to support and engage them before it is too late. "

ENDS

Notes to editors:

1. The London Schools Programme for Safety and Cohesion launch event will take place between 10.00 – 14.30 on Wednesday 5th at the Tower of London
2. The London Youth Crime Prevention Board was set up in 2007 in response to the growing levels of youth crime in the capital. The Board's membership is made up of agencies involved in prevention and enforcement issues including local authorities; children's services; Government Office for London; the Metropolitan Police; the MPA; schools; the Youth Justice Board; the GLA; London Councils; London Criminal Justice Board; and the voluntary sector and chaired by Lord Victor Adebowale, Chief Executive of Turning Point. Further details available at www.younglondonmatters.org
3. PRUs are run by local authorities and provide education for pupils who are unable to attend school or are excluded from school. A three-year project, led by London Councils and the London Youth Crime Prevention Board (LYCPB) has secured £525k from DCSF to improve the quality of education young people receive from PRUs in the capital by, for example, encouraging boroughs to offer a broader curriculum and working more closely with schools, colleges and the voluntary sector to boost the opportunities available to young people. Further details available at http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0237 & <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/media/current/pressdetail.htm?pk=616>.