

Study of Participants in Garda Special Projects

by the Centre for Social and Educational
Research, DIT, on behalf of the
Department of Justice, Equality and
Law Reform



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform commissioned the Centre for Social and Educational Research (CSER), Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) to conduct an examination of 'risk factors' with regard to participants of Garda Special Projects. Since 1991, An Garda Síochána has operated Special Projects, which are a network of youth oriented, locally based projects funded by the Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform and managed centrally by An Garda Síochána Community Relations Section.

A plethora of research studies exist with regard to the identification of risk factors in young people's lives. The rationale behind these studies is that in order to prevent the development of offending behaviour in children and young people, the factors that increase the risk of the growth of such behaviour need to be identified. As a consequence a wide range of indicators have been identified as influential in determining why some children and young people become offenders. These include the nature of the environments in which young people grow up and reside, household compositions, the types of facilities and support structures available to young people, the young people's social networks, and structural factors such as unemployment and types of housing.

The aim of this research study has been to develop a profile of risk factors, which are thought to be prevalent in the lives of young people involved with the Garda Special Projects. The profile developed focuses on various aspects of the young people's lives, which include the following; socio-economic factors, i.e. focusing on the wider community in which the young people reside, e.g. types of housing, unemployment rates, etc; the young people's general life styles, young people's perception of education and their levels of educational attainment, the nature of young people's relationships with family and friends and history of offending.

The profile has been compiled through the collection and analysis of the following data: (a) information from young people themselves on various aspects of their lives as well as their experiences of the Projects, (b) the use of Small Area Population Statistics in relation to the areas where Projects included in this study are located and (c) by the views of service providers within the sector. In total 130 young people were included in this study.

The summary profile of the sample of participants of Garda Special Projects included in this study is as follows:

- *The research has highlighted the extent to which the majority of areas in which the young people grow up and reside are homogenous, in the sense that they share many of the same characteristics and associated social problems. However, when considering risk factors a number of important variables must be accounted for. The risk indicators identified in this study are regarded as multifaceted and inter-related. A clear cycle of disadvantage exists with regard to the types of social problems faced by this group of young people within their communities;*
- *Key indicators of risk identified with regard to the communities in which young people live include high youth populations, the general lack of youth facilities and high levels of anti-social behaviour and intimidation;*
- *In addition, unemployment rates, rates of dependency on social welfare, levels of early school leaving, numbers of one parent families and households with more than four children were above the national average for all of the areas in which Projects included in this study were located;*
- *This group of young people also has very common needs. These include the needs for safe and structured environments, the need to have fun and to learn and experience new things and the need for positive role models in their lives. Service providers also*

- identified the real need to support and promote parental involvement in the young people's lives;*
- *Aspirations of educational achievement amongst the young people were low. Although 94 (85.5%) young people in the sample were currently attending school, just over half of these wished to complete their Leaving Certificate. The girls in the sample were more likely to want to complete either Junior or Leaving Certificate when compared to boys. On completion of school boys were more likely to want to seek either an apprenticeship or employment. Higher proportions of girls (71.5%) to boys (8; 28.5%) wished to continue to third level education. Sixty-five young people in the sample having previously been suspended from school;*
 - *Of the 16 young people (10 boys and 6 girls) in the sample who were currently not attending school, 11 had not completed any state examinations. Although this number is small relative to those currently attending school, the Garda Projects clearly have an important role to play in enhancing the future educational/employment aspects of this particular group of young people;*
 - *The extent to which young people can be identified as 'at risk' can also be examined by focusing on the young people's familial backgrounds. Research shows that young people living in two-parent household's face a lower than average risk of becoming involved in serious or persistent offending. The majority of young people (58; 52.8%) in this sample currently lived with both parents. Thirty-nine (35.5%) of the young people reported living in single parent households, mostly headed by women;*
 - *Only 10 (9.1%) young people in the sample referred to their father as the most important person in their lives, perhaps indicating the lack of a significant male in the young people's lives;*
 - *The number of young people included in sample who reported as previously been in trouble with the Gardai was high (65; 59.1%), the proportion of these were in the 12-16 age group. The most common reasons why young people had previously been in trouble with Gardai related to robbing cars/vans/bikes;*
 - *The frequency of young people's involvement in anti-social behaviours was also examined. A high number of young people were reported to having previously drank alcohol (69). Following alcohol use, over half of the sample also reported being involved in the following behaviours to some degree – skipping school (65) and stealing from a shop/supermarket (59);*
 - *Research has also shown a strong correlation between offending behaviour/anti social behaviour of individual young people and that of their peers. Sixty-two (56.4%) young people reported that someone close to them had previously been in trouble with the Gardai;*

In light of the recent commitment made in the National Development Plan (2000-2006) to significantly expand Garda Special Projects it is important that any future development of the programme is based on a sound theoretical basis and current research information which adequately addresses user needs and programme aims. For this reason it is purposed that a longitudinal research study needs to be commissioned which could follow a number of young people's entry in to and exit out of Garda Special Projects. This relates to the need to evaluate the work of the Projects with young people 'at risk' over time.

SECTION ONE

Introduction

1.1 Research Background

The Centre for Social and Educational Research (CSER)¹ at the Dublin Institute of Technology was commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to conduct an in-depth examination of participants of Garda Special Projects. Since 1991 An Garda Síochána has operated Special Projects, which aim to identify young people at risk of involving themselves in criminal/anti-social behaviour.

The Special Projects have been described as a scheme of youth oriented, locally based projects funded by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform and managed centrally by An Garda Síochána Community Relations Section (Bowden and Higgins, 2000). The aims of the Garda Special Projects are outlined as follows:

1. To divert young people from becoming involved in criminal/anti-social behaviour;
2. To provide suitable activities to facilitate personal development and encourage civic responsibility, and work towards improving the long-term employability prospects of the participants;

(An Garda Síochána Special Projects, *Policy Directive*).

The long-term objective of the Garda Special Projects has been outlined in *An Garda Síochána Policy Directive for Special Projects*. It is stated that this objective is to enable the target group of 10-18 year olds to integrate into the labour force in a systematic manner and to prevent them becoming unemployable. Each project targets a number of ‘at risk’ young people and seeks to engage them in activities designed to achieve these objectives. The Projects target young people in the 10-18 age group who are:

- Seriously at risk of becoming involved in the drugs and crime cycle;
- Already involved with crime, or likely to drop out of the educational system prematurely;

¹ The Centre for Social and Educational Research (CSER) is located in the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT), Rathmines House. The CSER is a research development and policy analysis body committed to carrying out independent research into social and educational issues in Ireland. The Centre aims to achieve this through the provision and dissemination of appropriate research data and information to policy makers and practitioners.

- In need of emotional and development support due to family circumstances;
- Unable to participate in other youth activities due to behavioural difficulties.

(An Garda Síochána Special Projects, *Policy Directive*).

A recent evaluation conducted by the Children's Research Centre, Trinity College Dublin on '*The Impact and Effectiveness of Garda Special Projects*' (Bowden and Higgins, 2000) consisted of an in-depth evaluation of the fourteen longest established projects. In general, the study found that the projects are having an impact on offending and anti-social behaviour. The young people involved reported positively on their experiences, and a majority reported a variety of positive learning outcomes.

1.2 Diversion Strategies used by An Garda Síochána

The Garda Special Projects in the context of a broader framework for youth crime prevention and the diversion of specific young people and the National Juvenile Office (NJO) has co-ordinating and management responsibilities for the juvenile diversion programmes.

The first programme to be established with the aim of diverting young people from criminal activity was the Garda Juvenile Diversion Programme (or the JLO Scheme), which was established in 1963. The importance of the Juvenile Diversion Programme is that it has now been established on a statutory basis by the *Children Act 2001*. In addition, the age of criminal responsibility has been raised from 7 to 12 years of age. It was not until the early 1990's that the Special Projects and the Schools Programmes were established as a complement to the Juvenile Diversion Programme that already existed. Youth organisations are responsible for the administration of Garda Special Projects at community level and aim to enhance community relations with An Garda Síochána. Gardaí are involved with the Special Projects through a range of activities - through representation on the management boards of Projects, through referrals of young people to Projects and through involvement in the activities/programmes of the Projects.

1.3 Research Objectives

The broad aims of this research study is to develop a profile of risk factors which are thought to be prevalent in the lives of young people involved with the Garda Special Projects. It is important to understand how the concept of risk factors is defined in the context of this research study. According to Leober (1990), children or young people ‘at risk’ is a term much used, but rarely well defined. The basic idea behind the use of risk factors in research is that individuals are influenced throughout their lives - but especially as they grow up – by a variety of factors that may lead them towards, or away from crime (Home Office, 1997).

The Home Office Consultation Document (1997) outlines the fact that whilst research cannot provide definite answers to why some young people become involved in crime and others do not, it indicates which of a wide range of factors appear to be most influential. A number of major research studies have been conducted (as outlined in greater detail in Section Two), many of which have been longitudinal in nature, and have centred around the importance of identifying risk factors with regard to young people who offend. In short, the factors that are most likely to have been identified in recent research include the following:

- Low income and poor housing;
- Living in a family with multiple problems;
- Being brought up by a criminal parent (s);
- Parental conflict and broken homes;
- Experiencing poor parenting and a lack of supervision;
- Poor discipline in the home and at school;
- Low intelligence and low school attainment;
- Associating with peers who offend and/or having brothers and sister who offend.

(Allen, 1996, Home Office, 1997).

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Criteria for the selection of the research sample

The objective of this research was to provide a profile of young people who are currently involved in Garda Special Projects. With the aim of selecting the research sample from Projects nation-wide a 'Background Information Survey' (see Appendix A) was sent to twenty-nine original Projects in November 2000. Twenty-three of the Projects returned their questionnaires, and it was from these responses that ten Projects were selected for inclusion in this study.

The aim of the 'Background Information Survey' was to gain information on the location of the project (urban or rural), the number of young people and age ranges catered for and prevalent social problems within the catchment area of Projects. This information was deemed important for the selection of Projects, particularly with regard to their urban/rural location and the size of client groups catered for. In addition, it was important at this stage of the research to ascertain whether or not uniform systems of recording information in relation to participants existed across Projects and whether or not this information could be used in the development of this profile. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Questions were asked on whether or not information was recorded on the young people attending the Projects, the nature of the information recorded, whether or not the same information was collected for each young person and whether or not other research studies/evaluations had been conducted in relation to the Projects or in communities in which Projects were located. Responses received varied considerably across those Projects for which the 'Background Information Survey' was returned.

A total of ten projects were selected for inclusion in the study. The fact that the largest proportion of projects are currently located in Dublin meant that a larger number of projects from Dublin would have to be selected. Therefore, four of the Projects selected were located in the Dublin area. An additional Project, also located in Dublin, was used for the purpose of piloting the research instrument. In all of the other counties represented (with the exception of Louth, Offaly and Limerick) at least one project has been selected. The reason for selecting only one project in the larger

counties of Galway and Cork, for example, was to allow for a wider spread of projects province wide.

1.4.2 Research techniques

This study of participants of Garda Special Projects combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods. More detail with regard to specific research activities is provided in each of the related sections of this report. However, a summary has been provided below;

- ***Documentary analysis of relevant literature*** in order to provide a general overview of the nature, provision and target group of the Garda Special Projects and also to focus on international research in the field relating specifically to the identification of risk factors and relevant prevention/intervention programmes;
- ***Review of Small Area Population Statistics*** available from the Census of the Population, 1996 for each of the areas where projects included in the study were located. The aim of providing a summary of these statistics is to provide a general overview of the types of communities where these young people grow up and reside. The types of statistics reviewed include types of housing, unemployment rates, crime rates, socio-economic group and social class, highest levels of education achieved, and so on (see Appendix B);
- ***Questionnaire administered to young people*** – following the documentary analysis of relevant literature relating to risk factors a questionnaire was designed for use with young people from projects nation wide (see Appendix C). The questionnaire developed includes both qualitative and quantitative responses. A researcher(s) administered the questionnaire with each of the young people. The questionnaire was piloted with a small group of young people before it was finalised. The questionnaire focuses briefly on a number of areas including questions about the area where the young person lives, his/her lifestyle, attitudes to education and attendance at school, relationships with family and friends, attitudes to offending and the young people's hopes for the future;
- ***Focus groups with participants*** – focus groups were conducted with a small number of young people with the aim of gathering more detailed information on the two particular issues; (i) the young people's own perceptions of risk factors and how they feel they can contribute to offending behaviour and (ii) to focus on

the young people's general views of the project, ways in which they feel the project could best meet their needs and recommendations they have for future service provision. The focus group schedule has been included in Appendix D;

- ***Completion of questionnaires by Project Co-ordinators and Gardaí working in the community*** in order to gain their views on the identification and targeting of risk factors. The aim of these questionnaires (see Appendices E and F) was to provide a balanced view of the perception of risk factors from both client and service provider perspectives. In addition, interviews were conducted with representatives from a national Garda and youth organisation with the aim of gaining their general views of the work of the Garda Special Project with regard to targeting young people 'at risk'.

1.4.3 Ethical Guidelines

This study was conducted in line with the ethical guidelines of the Sociological Association of Ireland (SAI). These Guidelines state that research/evaluations should;

'be based on the freely given consent of those studied. This implies a responsibility.... to explain as fully as possible and in terms meaningful to participants, what the research is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken and how it is to be promoted' (Sociological Association of Ireland, 1999:11).

Before administering the questionnaire to the young people, the researcher sought the consent of the parents of the young people who would be involved. This consent was sought through the Project Co-ordinators. In addition, immediately prior to the questionnaire being administered to the young people, the researcher informed the young person about the research and ensured them that no individual young person would be identified through the information presented in the final report.

1.5 Report Outline

This Section has provided a brief overview of the background, rationale and aims of this study. In addition, a brief summary of the research methodology has been outlined. More specific details in relation to the research methodology is provided in the following sections.

Section Two presents a comprehensive review of related literature. The purpose of the review is to reflect on the importance of identifying risk factors with regard to young offending. The review reflects on the results of relevant European studies that have been conducted in this area. A number of relevant prevention and intervention programmes are also described.

Section Three of this report presents a profile of young people involved in Garda Special Projects. This profile uses data collected from three sources, which include; Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) from the 1996 Census of the Population. In addition, individual and focus group interviews were conducted with participants of the projects.

Section Four presents the views of service providers in relation to their perception of 'risk factors' and the group of young people with whom they work. This includes information collected from Project Co-ordinators and Community Gardaí working with Projects which have been included in this study. A summary of data collected from additional interviews with other key personnel involved with the Projects (including representatives from National Garda and youth organisations) is also presented.

The final Section of the report provides a profile of current participants of Garda Special Projects. The profile focuses on various aspects of the young people's lives. These include; socio-economic factors, the young people's general lifestyles, the young people's perception of education and their levels of educational attainment, the nature of young people's relationships with family and friends and attitudes to offending. In addition, recommendations and suggestions with regard to future programme delivery are also provided.

SECTION TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this review is to reflect on the importance of identifying 'risk factors' with regard to young people and to locate this study in the context of knowledge that already exists with regard to risk factors and their relationship to offending behaviour.

With regard to its content, the review provides details on a number of comprehensive research studies conducted, which have identified risk factors and their importance in working with young people. These include the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development (1953), the Youth Lifestyles Survey 1993 and 1998/1999, the Christchurch Child Development Study (1990) and other related studies. European models for dealing with offending behaviours are also briefly outlined. The final section of the review deals with responses to the prevention of youth offending and focuses on particular prevention strategies/programmes that have been evaluated.

2.2 The importance of identifying 'risk factors'

According to Allen (1996) both theory and practice suggest that there is much to be gained by seeking to tackle the various deficits which many young offenders are known to experience which contribute to their offending behaviour. He says that research, for instance, has consistently shown that poverty, poor parental supervision and school failure can all contribute to the development of offending behaviour².

According to the Home Office (1997) risk factors associated with young offending often coincide and interact. Although it is not possible to predict with any degree of

² It must be highlighted, however, that while research studies have shown that there are a number of risk factors that increase the chances of young people developing behavioural problems, there is equally evidence that certain 'protective factors' can help to protect young people from problems. According to the Southwest Regional Centre for Drug-Free Schools and Communities (1994), research favouring the identification of 'protective factors' in young people's lives is based on the premise that individuals within high-risk environments are not equally vulnerable. Protective factor research is based on the premise that each environment with which children and young people interact can play a part in fostering 'resiliency' by providing certain protective factors in their lives. It is thought that these factors help children/young people to become resilient, whether they are provided in the context of their family, the school or the community.

certainty who will become an offender on the basis of the level of risk to which they are exposed, it is known that children exposed to multiple risks are disproportionately likely to end up as serious or persistent offenders. In the Home Office document a number of factors have been identified as affecting the way that children develop. These include the following:

1. *The family*: the single most important influence on a child's development is believed to be that of the family and it is those children who show signs of criminal behaviour at an early age who are most likely to end up as serious or persistent offenders. Research (Wells and Rankin, 1991) has also shown that the composition of family is one aspect of family life that is consistently associated with young people who offend. According to such research children who live in families with only one parent or in which marital relationships have been disrupted by divorce or separation are more likely to display a range of emotional and behavioural problems, including delinquency, than children from two parent families. In research carried out by Thornberry et al (1999), 4,000 young people and their caretakers were interviewed to analyse the prevalence of delinquent behaviours and drug use and the number of family transitions the youth had experienced. The researchers found that these young people had faced a substantial number of family transitions, which can result in decreased financial security and increased stress and conflict.
2. *The school*: the Home Office document (1997) also highlights the point that, to some extent, children and young people's behaviour and attitudes are shaped and influenced by their experiences at school. It has been suggested that children and young people who offend are more likely than others to fail at school, to persistently play truant, to behave disruptively or be permanently excluded from school. In addition, the characteristics of the school (relationships between pupils and staff, levels of staff and pupil motivation and commitment, the system of rules and how they are enforced) can play an important part in helping children and young people to stay out of trouble.
3. *Leisure use and peer groups*: the Home Office (1997) document also asserts that the use of leisure time and peer pressure, can influence the likelihood of

offending. For instance, the document states that offending by boys is associated with the amount of time they spend away from home and with their friends. In addition, those who spend their leisure time in unstructured and unsupervised activities on the street are more at risk of offending.

Additional research focusing on ‘risk factors and successful interventions for serious and violent juvenile offenders’ found that because several factors put children at risk of becoming serious and violent juvenile offenders (SVJ’s), it is unlikely that intervention efforts directed only toward a single source of influence (for example, individual, family, school or peers) will be successful (Juvenile Justice Bulletin, May 1998). It is believed that multiple-component programmes are required and that priority should be given to preventive actions that reduce risk factors in multiple domains. Because many of the same risk factors that predict young offending and violence also predict substance use, school dropout, early sexual involvement and teen pregnancy, the benefits of such early intervention programmes can be wide ranging (Juvenile Justice Bulletin, May 1998).

2.3 The use of ‘risk factors’ in research

There are a number of research studies, most of which have been longitudinal in nature, which have centred on the importance of identifying risk factors with regard to juvenile offending. A summary of these studies is presented below along with their principal research findings.

2.3.1 Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development

Described as one of the most detailed criminological investigations ever undertaken, the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development followed the careers of over 400 working-class boys in South London, mostly born during 1953 (cited in Utting et al, June 1993). The aim of the research was to determine how far criminality could be predicted, why delinquency began and to explain why the majority (but not all) teenage delinquents ceased their activities on reaching their twenties.

Interviews and tests, measuring their intelligence, achievement, personality and psychomotor skills, were carried out with the boys in their schools at ages 8, 10 and 14. Teachers, classmates and parents were also included in the research. Classmates were asked their opinions on the young person, in relation for example, to his popularity and troublesomeness. Interviews were conducted by social workers with parents until the boys were aged 14 or 15 years and information was collected on the boy's family income, living conditions, family circumstances and child rearing practices. Details of convictions for all of the boys was also gathered and the boys were also asked to give a self-report account of any offending. The boys were also interviewed when they had left school at ages 16, 18, 21, 25 and 31. The success of the research is largely due to the fact that the researchers in 1986 were still in touch with 96 per cent of the original sample.

A summary of the study's main findings is cited in Utting et al (June 1993) and includes the following:

- Men convicted at the earliest ages tended to become the most persistent offenders. Out of twenty-two chronic offenders who had been convicted of nine or more offences by age 32, all had appeared before a juvenile court before their 15th birthday;
- Many young offenders, especially those convicted only once or twice, had no convictions after the age of 19 or 20;
- Young offenders tended to be those who had been identified as impulsive, aggressive, troublesome, unpopular and dishonest at primary school. Their intelligence and attainment scores were lower than average;
- Neither the fathers occupational status, nor having a mother who worked were related to the later offending of young people. But future offenders were more likely to have been part of low income and larger families; lived in run down housing, received help from social services and shown signs of physical neglect by their parents;
- Experience of divorce or parental separation before the age of 10 was associated with future offending, as was conflict between parents in the home;
- Parents whose child-rearing practices included harsh and erratic discipline, a cruel, passive or neglecting attitude and poor overall supervision were also more likely to become involved in offending behaviour;

- Offending behaviours were likely to be higher for children where one or both parents or an older sibling had a background of offending.
(Utting et al, 1993, p. 12).

A significant finding of the research was that coming from a large family was a factor associated with young offending, particularly because these families also tended to be poor and have very poor housing conditions. According to Utting et al. (1993), coming from a low-income family, a large family or having a parent with a criminal record effectively doubled the risk of later delinquency. The same was also true for young people who were found to have below average IQ or who suffered from unsatisfactory parenting, as assessed by social workers. Of the 63 boys involved in the research who combined three or more of these factors during primary school years, almost half offended as juveniles (Utting et al., 1993).

2.3.2 Youth Lifestyles Survey (1998/99)

The Youth Lifestyles Survey (YLS) 1998/99, conducted on behalf of the Home Office (UK), focuses on admissions of offending by 12 to 30 year olds living in private households in England and Wales. The findings of the survey show that age makes a difference to what type of offences are committed and that young women tend to grow out of offending sooner than young men. For them, some forms of offending tail off when they are in their early twenties or before (for example, criminal damage, fighting and shoplifting). The YLS assesses trends in self-reported offending between 1992/93 and 1998/99 among a sub sample of 14-25 year olds. The survey collected information on risk factors associated with an increase in offending. Such risk factors included individual factors such as IQ, temperament, family background, psychosocial factors, experiences of school and lifestyle factors such as drug and alcohol use, leisure activities and friendship groups.

In the YLS, three-quarters of respondents lived with both natural parents either currently or at the age of fifteen. Fifteen per cent lived in lone parent families and eight per cent in stepfamilies. Those who lived with two parents had lower levels of serious or persistent offending than those living in either lone parent families or stepfamilies. Among both males and females, those living in stepfamilies had high levels of offending. Boys living in lone parent families also had high levels of

offending although girls did not. In addition the survey found that those young people who were poorly supervised were more likely to be offenders. The relationship was found to be particularly strong among younger teens – 27 per cent of boys aged 12 to 17 who were poorly supervised were offenders compared to nine per cent who were better supervised. Poorly supervised girls were also more likely to be offenders (Flood-Page et al., 2000).

In 1993 YLS found a significant relationship between offending behaviour and having family members, friends or neighbours who had been in trouble with the police. The 1998/99 survey also shows that those young people who knew offenders also had higher levels of offending themselves. Males with friends or relations who had been in trouble with the police were over three times as likely to be offenders themselves. This was true for both under 18's and 18 to 30 years olds. Having friends who had previously offended had the greatest effects on offending in young people. Having neighbours and family who were delinquent had a significant association with the likelihood of being a serious or persistent offender but the effect was less than having delinquent friends.

In relation to school, the majority of young people sampled were found to like school – only 25 per cent of those were still at school and 37 per cent of those who had left school said that they did not like it. Those who did not like school were more likely to be offenders. This was true for both those still at school and those who had left. The relationship between dissatisfaction with school and offending was strongest among 12-16 year olds. Boys of this age who did not like school were three times as likely to offend (31%) than those who liked school (9%). Girls who did not like school were four times as likely to be offenders (20% compared to 5%).

The key points from the 1998/99 Youth Lifestyles Survey include the following:

- Almost a fifth (19%) of 12-30 year olds admitted to one or more offences in the last 12 months. Men (26%) were more likely to admit offending than women (11%). Those aged 14 to 21 years were the most likely to be offenders;
- The average age when offending started was 13½ years for boys and 14 years for girls;

- Half of those who said they had offended in the last year admitted just one or two offences. But the most prolific 10% of offenders were responsible for nearly half of all the crimes admitted – they represented 1% of the full sample;
- Type of offending varies by age. Amongst men, for example, fighting and criminal damage make up two-thirds of offences among 12 to 13 year olds, half of 14 to 15 year olds' offences and less than one in twenty offences committed by 26 to 30 year olds;
- The proportion of men admitting to property offences stays about the same until age 25. It declines in the late 20's, when offending involves mainly fraud (principally tax evasion and expenses fraud) or workplace theft;
- Between 1992/93 and 1998/99, offending among boys aged 14-17 years increased by 14 percentage points, but fell by 6 percentage points among men aged 18-25. There was little change for women overall. However, these figures conceal changes in specific offences over time. Fighting increased among males, though it fell among females. Buying and selling stolen goods fell, as did fraud among males;
- Three per cent of 12-30 year olds (4% of men and 1% of women) said they had been cautioned or taken to court in the last 12 months on at least one occasion. This was 12% of those admitting offending and 18% of persistent offenders.

(Campbell and Harrington, 2000).

2.3.3 Christchurch Child Development Study

Fergusson, et al. (1990) describe the results of a longitudinal research study that focuses on the relationship between family social background and risks of problems in the areas of health, education, behaviour and offending. This research involved a birth cohort of 1,265 New Zealand children and their families. A variety of data collection methods were used including maternal interviews, data from hospital and general practitioner records, information from the child's class teacher and testing and interviews with the children were used.

Offending and related behaviours were measured by (i) whether at 11 years the child was reported as having been in trouble with the police, in serious conflict with neighbours or school authorities, (ii) the number of offending behaviours reported by

the child at age 11 years, based on a 30 item checklist of self-reported offending behaviour, (iii) whether the child was reported as having smoked on the basis of self or maternal reports; (iv) whether the child was reported as having used illicit drugs on the basis of self or maternal report; and (v) the child's frequency of school attendance during the period from 5 to 11 years.

In summary, the analysis showed the presence of small consistent correlation's between family social background and individual outcomes on a range of childhood measures. However, Fergusson et al (1990) say that while this analysis suggests that the major impact of social conditions on childhood is to influence vulnerability to childhood problems, the model proposed does not clearly identify the nature of these vulnerability processes. They contend that it seems highly likely that these vulnerability processes will reflect an aggregate of effects arising from family economic, material, social, emotional and child-rearing practices.

2.3.4 Other Related Research

The Home Office Consultation Document (1997) argues that the single most important influence on a child's development is that of the family. This is line with many of the research findings outlined above and particularly the fact that research has suggested that children who live in a single-parent or step-parent family are more at risk of offending than those who live with both natural parents. However, it is outlined that this is not as a direct result of the family structure itself; single or step parents may find it difficult for a variety of reasons to supervise their children or exercise consistent discipline and family relationships may be more difficult in situations where a parent is not present. This document also states that research has shown that where children are brought up in a stable environment and have a good relationship with their parents, they are less likely to display offending behaviour. The capacity and willingness of the parent or parents to supervise their children and exercise fair and consistent discipline is regarded as vital (Home Office, 1997).

Thornberry et al (1999) examined the impact that multiple changes in family structures have on an adolescent's risk of serious problem behaviour. Research teams in three cities across America interviewed 4000 young people and their caretakers to analyse the prevalence of delinquent behaviours and drug use and the number of

family transitions that the young person had experienced. The research found that these young people faced a substantial number of family transitions, which can result in decreased financial security and increased stress and conflict. The central question of this research was ‘are adolescents who experience multiple changes in family structure more likely to be involved in delinquency and drug use than adolescents who live in more stable families?’

The findings suggest that multiple family transitions are a risk factor for delinquency. The article states that these findings have implications for the prevention and treatment of delinquency and drug use. Family transitions may have a number of consequences for adolescent adjustment, for example, adolescents who experienced ongoing stress may have difficulty managing anger and other negative emotions and this may contribute to their involvement with delinquency or drugs.

The *Rochester Youth Development Study* is a longitudinal study of 1,000 urban young people, which investigates the causes and consequences of adolescent delinquency and drug use by following a sample of high-risk urban youths from their early teenage years through their early adult years. The Rochester study examined the quality of parent-child relationships to determine the impact of family process factors (such as attachment, involvement and supervision) on delinquency. Researchers found the following:

- Attachment and involvement were both significantly related to offending in children and young people. Children who were more attached to and involved with their parents were less involved in offending behaviour;
- The relationship between family process factors and young offending was bi-directional – poor parenting increased the probability of offending behaviour and offending behaviour further weakened the relationship between parent and child;
- The impact of family variables appeared to fade as adolescents became older and more independent from their parents.

(Browning et al, 1999).

The *Pittsburgh Youth Study* is another longitudinal study conducted in the USA, involving 1,517 inner city boys from Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh study has been following three samples of boys for over a decade to advance knowledge about why and how boys become involved in delinquent and other problem behaviours. A central focus of this study is to identify the risk factors which contribute to the young people's offending behaviour. A basic premise of the Pittsburgh Youth Study is that offending by most young people is the result of forces within an individual (intelligence quotient, personality) and forces in an individual's social environment (parents, siblings, peers) in different contexts (family, school, neighbourhood).

The study found that delinquency was related to individual risk factors such as impulsiveness, IQ and personality:

- Both impulsive judgement and impulsive behaviour were significantly and positively related to delinquency, accounting for 16 per cent of the variance in delinquency when the effects of socio-economic status and IQ were controlled. Researchers found that impulsiveness interacts with neighbourhood factors to influence juvenile offending. For example, impulsive boys were at greatest risk of offending in Pittsburgh's poorest neighbourhoods, perhaps due to lower levels of informal social controls;
- In terms of personality, delinquents tended to have a low threshold for experiencing negative emotions (such as fear, anxiety and anger) and they tended to behave in a less constrained manner (such as seeking thrills and acting without caution).

(Browning and Loeber, 1999)

Of the family risk factors examined, poor supervision was the best explanatory variable for young people, as well as poor parent/son communication. Physical punishment by the mother was also found to increase the risk of young offending. Of the socio-economic risk factors examined, family receipt of welfare payments was associated with the highest risk of young people, followed by low socio-economic status. Living in a 'bad' neighbourhood was also found to double the risk of offending in young people (Browning and Loeber, 1999).

2.4 European Systems of Dealing with Young People who Offend

According to Sametz (2000), comparisons of juvenile crime rates in various countries are severely limited by wide variations in national legal systems, categories of criminal behaviour and methods of reporting crimes. However, he says that certain similarities are apparent. For instance, Canadian, Australian and European victimisation studies show that the actual number of crimes to be several times those known to the authorities. According to one study conducted in Finland, the larcenies known to the police were only 5 per cent of the total that occurred.

This paper also reports that the major causes of delinquency in various countries are related to each nation's economic and social environment. Sametz says that in Brazil, for instance, the incidence of widespread poverty and the number of abandoned children in large city slums may be primary causes of juvenile crime. Furthering his argument he said that although the Soviet Union abolished its juvenile court system in 1935, it was not successful in eliminating delinquency. The government blamed the problems of delinquency on inadequate parenting, failure of the education system and particularly schools. He also says that what is universally reported is the fundamental change or breakdown of traditional patterns of family living and this is cited as a major cause of juvenile crime around the world.

According to Bowden and Higgins (2000), two major progressive trends have occurred at a European level. They say that the first is the shift away from the use of adversarial or retributive measures utilising courts and a formal justice system and towards developing alternative sanctions and preventative programmes within the community. The second trend is also moving away from the socially disintegrative effects of incarceration policies and towards using family and community based restorative justice practices in which the offender has to face his/her victim.

Walgrave and Mehlbye (1998) say that generally within juvenile justice the retributive character has disappeared and a more instrumentalist rehabilitative approach has become predominant. However, they do highlight the fact that despite these common basic assumptions across systems, there are major differences in the way countries

organise their systems. The table below outlines the diversity in responses to young offending in a number of different European countries.

Belgium Until age 17	Denmark Until age 17	Scotland Until age 15	Netherlands Until age 15	France Age 13-17	Italy Age 14-17	England Age 10-17	Germany Age 14-17
Refer to welfare Reprimand Supervision (+conditions) Placement in family or institution Placement in closed institution (max until age 20) Ages 16-17: Referral to adult court	Until age 14: All kinds of ambulant and residential care Ages 15-17: Penal court with special rules for juveniles Suspended charge Fine Placement in institution Imprisonment in Socio pedagogic institution (Max 8 years) Imprisonment	Until age 15: Discharge Supervision Order Residential Supervision From age 8: Adult court for very serious and technical offences	Refer to welfare jurisdiction as 'child in danger' Age 15-17: Reprimand Fine Probation Custody in correctional school (max 2 years) Age 16-17: Referral to adult court	Back to family Reprimand Supervision Order (+ conditions) Placement in family or institution Age 15-17: Service Order Fine Probation Custody (at a max. This would be ½ that given to adults)	Pardon Dismissal for inability to understand and welfare Age 15-17: Probation (max 1 year or 3 years) Custody in approved schools	Pardon Detention Dismissal for inability to understand and welfare Age 15-17: Discharge (+ conditions) Measures on parents (bind over' fine, Compensation Order) Attendance Centre (max 24/36 hours) Supervision (+ requirements) From age 15: Detention in young offenders institution From age 16: Probation (+ requirements) Community service	Educational measures, directives or guidance Institutional education Age 15-17: Pay fines, damages or costs Parents must pay fine, damages or costs Order to parents to ensure good behaviour From age 12 : Reformatory school (2-4 years) From age 15: Imprisonment From age 16: Community service Detention

Source: Walgrave and Mehlbye, 1998: 9.

In relation to specific procedures for delinquent juveniles, a review of the European literature highlights the fact that all countries provide special procedural rules for the prosecution of young offenders. The research compiled by Walgrave and Mehlbye (1998) highlights the fact that in almost all countries the police have few discretionary powers, so that they cannot take special measures against minors. They state that it is only in the Netherlands, England and Wales and in Ireland that this is different:

'In the Netherlands the police can independently decide to classify a case. After an informal warning, the minor can be referred to a diversion programme or a formal report can be made and sent to the Public Prosecutor..... In England and Wales the police can classify the case. After an informal warning they can pronounce a formal caution, or they can refer the case to the Crown Prosecution Service aiming at further prosecution. Here cautioning is also used a lot, especially up to the age of 16. Often informal conditions are added, such as reparation or supervision. Many decisions are taken in consultation with the social sector. Therefore, in many districts Inter-Agency Juvenile Bureau's were established where regularly consultation takes place between the police, social services, education and youth services. In Ireland, the police can implement a formal method of diversions through its Juvenile Liaison Schemes, which provide for cautioning instead of prosecution. It is directed mainly at first offenders, although the Director of Public Prosecutions may also decide to caution juveniles committing more serious offences through the Juvenile Liaison Schemes' (Walgrave and Mehlbye, 1998: 6).

As a consequence of the major differences across European countries, Walgrave and Melhbye (1998) outline the difficulties encountered when conducting comparative research. They say that detailed comparisons of trends in juvenile crimes across Europe is extremely difficult:

'Among the countries too great differences persist with regard to availability of data, age categories used, the existence of different diversionary practices which are unequally reflected in the statistics, differences in primary sources, etc. Good comparisons between the countries are therefore completely impossible. It is quite impossible to deduce from the data if the amount and kind of juvenile crime in one country are different from another one or from the others in general. As a consequence, it is also impossible to estimate differences among the countries in the relative amounts in police and judicial decision or in the relative severity, for instance' (Walgrave and Melhbye, 1998: 12).

2.5 Understanding and Preventing Juvenile Offending

As outlined above, in order to prevent the development of offending behaviour in children/young people, the factors that increase the risk of the growth of such behaviour need to be identified. Steiner (1994) says that once these factors are identified then strategies to address them, including enhancing the protective factors for children to resist the effect of the risk factors can be planned and implemented. As outlined above, the body of research on youth offending and crime has identified a number of factors, inter linked with the development of delinquent behaviour. According to Steiner these factors can be grouped in the following broad categories: the family, the community, the school, the individual and the peer group. Within each of these categories, specific risk factors can be identified, such as child abuse and family disintegration, economic and social deprivation, low neighbourhood attachment, academic failure, truancy and school drop-out (Steiner, 1994).

From reviewing the relevant literature in the area it is clear that currently the prevailing opinion is that not enough is being done to prevent children and young people becoming involved in crime and anti-social behaviour. A Home Office document which presents new approaches to tackling youth crime in England and Wales (Nov, 1997), outlines the point that if we are serious about crime, then action must start early and must be targeted where it is likely to be effective. The document points out that parents of young offenders may not directly be to blame for the crimes of their children, but parents have to be responsible for providing their children with proper care and control.

Four approaches to preventing criminal behaviour are presented in a Working Paper prepared by the United Nations (1999). These *four approaches* to crime prevention are as follows:

1. *Child development*: the basis of this approach is that interventions are designed to address a variety of factors, which are believed to be associated with later delinquency and crime. It follows that interventions designed to address those factors through improved parenting skills, enriched early education and improved physical and mental health could lead to reductions in future crime and delinquency;

2. *Community development*: an important strand of preventative work includes efforts to strengthen the economic viability and social cohesiveness of local communities, to provide more local services and facilities for community enhancement, to strengthen residents ties to their local communities, to teach young people about the importance of the rule of law and to develop local police-community relations;
3. *Social development*: this approach proceeds on the assumption that in developing countries and countries with economies in transition much crime results from poverty, lack of paid employment, poor education, discrimination and a variety of other social and economic deprivations. It is assumed that social development will remove these 'causes' of crime;
4. *Situational crime prevention*: situational prevention, unlike all of the above approaches, seeks to reduce the motivation for crime and, according to this Paper, has been the fastest growing approach to crime prevention during the last decade.

(From: *Effective Crime Prevention: Keeping Pace with the New Development*, 15 Dec, paper prepared from the Tenth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, pp: 2-3).

In relation to the child development approach outlined above a number of important research studies have focused on the outcomes of interventions at the early stages of the child's life. These studies inform this overall discussion on the importance of the identification of risk factors as well as having important policy implications. A brief discussion of such projects is presented here.

The Report of the National Forum for Early Childhood Education (1998), states that in the thirty years since Project Head Start³ (1965) was launched in the United States, intervention programmes which provide high quality early childhood education continue to be regarded as necessary elements of social policies which address problems of inequity in the educational and social systems. The report states that such programmes are regarded as central to initiatives intended to combat social injustice insofar as they attempt to provide equality of access to education systems

³ Head Start is regarded as the most established and well-researched government programmes. Head Start began in 1965 as a one year child development programme targeted at poor families with children of pre-school age. Most Head Start programmes involve a centre-based half-day programme for child aged 4. The programme offers a comprehensive approach to child development, involving parents in training, education and oversight, and providing medical and nutrition services (Reynolds, Mann, Meidel and Smokowski, 1997).

and improve equality of opportunity in terms of children's achievement within those systems. The report also outlines the fact that in Ireland in recent years a number of policy documents have acknowledged the role of early childhood education in this regard and have made recommendations and commitments in relation to the implementation of programmes.

According to the Home Office Consultation Document (1997), one of the best known examples of early intervention is the High/Scope Perry Pre-school Project (USA). This project was established with the explicit objective of reducing the risk of delinquency. The programme itself took place over five years in the 1960's and participants have been followed into adulthood. The programme was focused on the growth and development of pre-school aged African-American children living in poverty and at risk of educational failure. The central intervention was high quality pre-school education for children and parents were supported to become partners in their children's education (Bowes, 2000).

The project placed the children either in a pre-school child development programme or in a control group for a period of, in most cases, two years at the age of three. The child development programme involved pre-school supervision of children by teachers and weekly home visits to mothers and children by teachers. Over a period of 16 years, information was collected on all of the children included in the project. The information included data on aspects of the young person's life including school performance, attitudes, employment record and self and police reported delinquency (Home Office, 1997).

Despite the small sample sizes included in this project, both the short term and the long-term assessments highlight positive effects for children. As with other intervention studies of this decade the first outcomes measured were changes in IQ. At the end of the programme intervention, children in the pre-school group had IQ scores that exceeded the control group by over 11 points (Karoly et al, 1998).

In addition, these positive IQ effects were followed by improved academic achievement even after differences in IQ between the groups ceased to be significantly significant. For example, achievement test scores for programme

participants remained significantly higher than those for the control group up to age 4. Pre-school children also attained better grades and were more likely to have graduated from high-school. However, at age 28 there were no differences in post secondary education participation (Schweinhart et al, 1993).

Teenage pregnancy rates were also found to be lower (about half) and arrest rates were 40% lower than for children in the control groups at the age of 19 years. By the age of 27, about one in three of the control group had been arrested five or more times compared with about one in fourteen of those who had attended the pre-school programme (Schweinhart and Weikart, 1993). A cost benefit analysis of the project (Schweinhart, 1987) found that it cost in the region of \$5,000 per child per year. The analysis showed that, for every \$1 invested, \$6 was saved in future public expenditure. On that basis, early intervention to prevent children offending makes sound financial sense (Home Office, 1997).

2.6 Responses to the Prevention of Juvenile Offending

According to the UK *Crime and Disorder Act of 1998* there is no single or simple way of preventing an individual child or young person from offending. The youth justice reforms set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 are intended to lead to improved links between health, education, social services, probation and police dealing with young people at risk of offending. Six key objectives are outlined in the Act and all contributors to the youth justice system in the United Kingdom were asked to reflect on the way they plan, carry out and monitor their work, as appropriate to their individual roles and responsibilities. These objectives were:

1. The swift administration of justice so that every young person accused of breaking the law has the matter resolved without delay: it is felt that speedy procedures minimise the risk of offending while awaiting trial; ensure that if found guilty the sentence is meaningful and understood by the young person as a consequence of his/her behaviour and ensure that early action can be taken to prevent further offending. It is believed that dealing with cases quickly, so that action can be taken to prevent further offending if the young person is found guilty, is

particularly important where the child or young person concerned has a history of offending or is alleged to have committed several offences;

2. Confronting young offenders with the consequences of their offending, for themselves and their family, their victims and the community and helping them to develop a sense of personal responsibility: the Act states that understanding the effect of their behaviour on others, particularly the victim, is an important lesson for a young offender to learn. If young people understand the consequences of their behaviour and take personal responsibility for it, they are less likely to repeat it;
3. Intervention, which takes into account the particular factors (personal, family, social, educational or health) that put the young person at risk of offending and which strengthens 'protective factors': this objective calls for a full range of intervention and orders to be available locally;
4. Punishment proportionate to the seriousness and persistence of the offending: if young people who do offend, their victims and the wider public (including in particular other children and young people), are to have confidence in the youth justice system, they need to feel that the response fairly reflects the seriousness of the offending as determined by the court, taking account of the circumstances of the case;
5. Encouraging reparation to victims by young offenders: the Act states that making amends through reparation gives the young person the opportunity to take responsibility for and control of, his/her behaviour and to make a new start. Very importantly, it also helps the young person to understand the impact of his/her behaviour on others;
6. Reinforcing the responsibilities of parents: this objective is based on the premise that parents/guardians have a primary role to play in preventing their children from offending and, if they do offend, from re-offending.

The Home Office document outlining new approaches to tackling youth crime in England and Wales (Nov, 1997), highlights a number of important areas which needed to be tackled with regard to supporting children, families and communities. Such measures include the following:

- Measures to support families including assistance for single parents to get off benefits and return to work, to help prevent marriage and family breakdown

- and to deal with such breakdown, if it does occur, with the least possible damage to any children;
- A determined approach to social exclusion focusing on new ways of ensuring that all have a chance to share in the benefits of economic success;
 - Policies to help children achieve at school, including good nursery education for all three and four year olds, higher school standards, with a particular focus on literacy and numeracy skills in primary schools, steps to tackle truancy and prevent so many exclusions, study support in out of school hours and better links between schools and business to help young people make the transition to adult working life;
 - Providing real opportunities for jobs, training and leisure aimed at re-engaging in education or training young people up to the age of 17 years;
 - Action to tackle drug use with new initiatives in the criminal justice system;
 - Targeted youth crime prevention initiatives.

Examples of particular prevention programmes are presented below.

2.6.1 The Milton Keynes Youth Crime Project

The Milton Keynes Youth Crime Project has been described as an inter-agency programme for 5 to 19 year olds in the Milton Keynes area, aimed at reducing levels of offending and re-offending and at fostering a greater sense of the consequences of offending. The project has three linked components:

- (i) The primary stage – designed to promote personal responsibility amongst school children;
- (ii) The secondary stage – dealing with young people who are not in school;
- (iii) The tertiary stage – aimed at young people who have come into contact with the criminal justice system.

A central component of the tertiary stage is a mediation programme, which combines a police caution with either victim-offender mediation (where both parties meet), or indirect mediation (where the mediator negotiates between the parties to secure an agreement). The intention of the project is that mediation results in a combination of reparation, voluntary education and offenders' parents being referred to the parents'

support group. However, findings from the project's work to date suggest that such an intensive intervention is rarely achieved (Mackie and Burrows, 2000).

2.6.2 Project Craft

In the United States a successful vocational training programme for high-risk youth and juvenile offenders sponsored by the Home Builders Institute (HBI) is addressing youth crime and unemployment and helping to reduce recidivism. The programme provides these youth with social, personal and vocational skills and employment opportunities to help them achieve economic success and avoid involvement in criminal activity (Hamilton and McKinney, 1996).

Project Craft offers pre-apprenticeship training and job placement in the home building industry and related occupations. The programme uses a holistic approach that combines career training, support services (employability training, social skills training, case management, etc.) and community service activities sponsored by the construction industry. Project Craft can be used as a prevention or intervention programme or as an alternative to custodial measures. The project can be implemented in residential juvenile correctional facilities or it can operate as a community-based programme for youth in after care or under day treatment supervision.

This project was independently evaluated over a period of 4 years and the following outcomes were highlighted:

- Project Craft has a high rate of job placement for its graduates. By the end of the national programmes (Sept. 1998), 94 of the 140 graduates in the three original demonstration sites had been placed in jobs in the home building industry;
- Project Craft was also found to be successful in providing long-term follow-up for juvenile offenders after release and community placement. This helps ensure the adjustment and stability of these offenders after they return to their communities.

2.6.3 Communities That Care

Communities That Care (CTC) has been described as an innovative training and consulting programme that assists communities to target risk and protective factors by

developing evidence-based prevention programmes tailored to local conditions. The development of the CTC has been based mainly on United States research and initially aimed at substance use prevention (Toumbourou, 2000). Recently the Centre for Adolescent Health in Victoria, Australia implemented and evaluated the CTC Programmes.

The first stage in the CTC approach involves establishing community-planning foras, bringing together those working in crime prevention with others from government and non-government jurisdictions. A critical stage in the CTC approach also involves formally assessing risk (predictors of behavioural and health outcomes) and protective (moderators and mediators of risk factors) factors.

According to Toumbourou (2000) the measurement of risk factors within the programmes reflects a social settings approach to prevention examining factors in the key settings of the community, schools, families, peer groups and within the domain of individual attitudes and behaviour. A further stage in CTC process involves the selection of evidence-based preventative programmes matched to address community prevention targets

2.7 Overview

The aim of this review has been to highlight the importance of identifying risk factors with regard to young offending, by reflecting to a large extent on the results of relevant research studies that have been conducted.

A wide range of indicators were identified as most influential in determining why some young people become offenders. These included, for instance, poor housing conditions, low intelligence and low school attainment, poor parenting and lack of supervision, being brought up by criminal parents and so on. A number of longitudinal studies provide rich sources of data with regard to the identification of the types of risk factors, which lead to young people offending. Described as one of the most comprehensive studies of its kind - the Cambridge Study in to Delinquent Behaviour - aimed to determine how far criminality could be predicted, why

delinquency began and to explain why the majority (but not all) of teenage offenders ceased their activities on reaching their twenties.

Focusing on European systems for dealing with young offenders highlights the diversity in responses used across countries and therefore making it almost impossible to make detailed comparisons across Europe. Responses to young people who offend have also been outlined with particular reference to specific prevention programmes – the Milton Keynes Youth Crime Project and Project Craft and the Communities That Care Programme.

SECTION THREE

Profile of Young People involved in Garda Special Projects

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this section is to provide a profile of young people ‘at risk’ who are currently involved in Garda Special Projects. As highlighted from relevant research studies, presented in Section Two of this report, important risk factors in the young people’s lives include family background, educational attainment and attitudes to education and the type of community in which the young people reside.

A total of 130 young people were included in this sample (110 in individual interviews and 20 in focus group interviews).

The profile presented here is based on individual and group interviews conducted with the young people and it is also informed by Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS). SAPS have been used to provide demographic information on the types of areas in which the young people reside, more details of which have been provided below.

3.2 Methods

A variety of methods were used in the process of developing a profile of the young people involved in the Garda Special Projects. These are as follows;

3.2.1 Small Area Population Statistics

Small Area Population Statistics were gathered for the areas where each of the projects included in the study were located. The aim of presenting a summary of the Small Area Population Statistics is to provide a very broad overview of the types of areas in which young people using the projects grow up and reside. Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) were obtained from the Central Statistics Office. Unfortunately, for the purpose of this report, statistics from the 1996 Census have only been available. It must be noted that many changes have occurred in recent years with regard to particular aspects of Irish demography (e.g. types of households,

unemployment rates and so on) and this must be accounted for in interpreting the Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) presented below. However, these statistics are deemed relevant in the sense that even though they are based on the 1996 Census, they provide an indication of the types of environments where the young people have grown up over the past five years.

3.2.2 The development of a questionnaire for use with project participants

Interviews were conducted with a sample of young people from the projects selected nation wide. Related literature with regard to profiling young people at risk was examined in detail (see Section Two) before developing the interview schedule.

From the literature reviewed and presented in Section Two a range of risk factors were identified as contributing to young people's offending behaviour. These included structural factors such as unemployment, poor housing conditions, etc. Family background was also identified as one of the most important influences on the child development, such as parental conflict and/or broken homes, experiencing poor parenting and a lack of supervision, poor discipline, the lack of significant males in the young people's lives and living in a family with multiple problems. Educational attainment and attitudes to education were also considered significant in identifying young people at risk.

The questionnaire (see Appendix C) that was developed for this study for use with young people was based on a number of dimensions in the young people's lives. These included the following;

1. Background information which focused on the young person's involvement with the project and their opinions of how they had been referred;
2. The young people's views on the area/community where they lived;
3. The young people's lifestyles: the aim of focusing on the young people's life styles was to ascertain whether or not they were involved in any other structured activities within their communities. The related literature has shown that the use of leisure time and peer pressure can be an important influence on the likelihood of offending (Home Office, 1997). Questions were included on how young people would spend a typical day, types of sports/hobbies they were involved in, as well as any additional clubs, groups or organisations that they took part in. The

gender aspect of young people's involvement in such structured activities was also focused on;

4. Education and attendance at school: this included the young people's views on education in general and questions relating to whether or not they were attending school;
5. Friends and family⁴: The literature reviewed has highlighted the notion that the single most important influence on a child's development is that of the family. Various dimensions of the familial aspects of young peoples lives has been found in previous research studies to be important indicators with regard to identifying young people at risk. According to Utting et al (1993), coming from a low-income family, a large family or having a parent with a criminal record effectively doubled the risk of later delinquency. In the individual interviews with young people questions related to who the young people currently lived with and the nature of their relationships with those closest to them;
6. History of anti-social behaviour/offending: this section of the questionnaire focused on whether or not the young people had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí and the frequency with which they were involved in a range of behaviours such as stealing, drinking alcohol and so on;
7. The final section of the questionnaire focused on the young people's hopes for the future and the young people were also asked if they would like to make any additional comments.

Obviously, the nature of asking young people questions directly related to risk factors, such as issues related to their family, offending behaviour and so on, is extremely sensitive and was a factor that needed to be accounted for both in the collection of the research data, as well as in the presentation of the research results.

Before the interviews were conducted parental consent was sought with the help of the Project Co-ordinators. In addition, consent from the young people themselves was also sought before the interview began. The researcher outlined the purpose of the interview and the areas that the young people would be asked to talk about. The

⁴ It must be noted that although family background is regarded as a highly significant factor in identifying young people at risk, the extent to which the researcher(s) could ask young people about their family was limited. This was mainly due to the fact that the privacy of the family had to be respected. Therefore questions about the family were kept very basic and no questions were asked if the researcher(s) felt that the young person was not comfortable.

young people were made aware that they did not have to answer any questions they were not comfortable with and that they could terminate the interview at any time.

3.2.3 Focus groups with young people

In addition, five focus groups were conducted with a total of 20 young people. These focus groups were conducted following the collection of data from the individual interviews with young people. A total of twenty young people participated in focus groups. The questions that were asked in these focus groups are outlined in greater detail in Appendix D. The purpose of the focus groups were two-fold; (i) to focus on the young people's own perceptions of *risk factors* and how they felt these had contributed to their offending behaviour and to gain an overall perspective of the young people's lives from their own point of view. (ii) Secondly, the focus groups also focused on the young people's general views of the project, ways in which they felt the project could best meet their needs and recommendations they had for future provision.

3.3 Presentation of Key Findings

3.3.1 Area Profiles

Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) are available for many different geographical areas, for instance, District Electoral Divisions and Urban and Rural Districts for each county or for Wards of the County Boroughs of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford and Galway. It must be noted that the size of the populations presented for each of the areas depended largely on the size of the geographical area for which statistics were available. SAPS for the following areas have been used for the purpose of developing this profile;

- Tralee, County Kerry;
- Navan;
- Waterford County Borough;
- County Sligo;
- Cork County Borough, Shanakeil;
- Dublin County Borough, Priorswood DED;

- Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown DED;
- South Dublin, Tallaght Jobstown DED;
- Merchants Quay DED;
- Galway County Borough, Ballybane DED.

The Table below outlines the variations in total populations between the areas for which SAPS are presented. This variation of the size of the populations for areas presented must be taken into account.

Table 3.1: Populations for areas for which SAPS are presented

Project location	Population
Tralee, Co. Kerry	19, 950
Navan	12, 810
Waterford County Borough	42, 540
County Sligo	55,821
Cork County Borough, Shanakeil	3689
Dublin County Borough Priorswood DED	3790
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, Co. Dublin	880
South Dublin, Tallaght, Jobstown DED	7279
Merchants Quay DED	2296
Galway County Borough, Ballybane DED	4979

Source: CSO, SAPS, 1996

For the projects located in Dublin and the other major cities including Galway, Cork and Waterford, SAPS were available for smaller areas and therefore the corresponding population is smaller and the statistics more precise. For counties such as Sligo, Kerry and Navan the overall statistics for the county are only available.

Specific details in relation to the information from the SAPS pertaining to specific areas/projects has been presented in Appendix B. In the Appendix, each area has been presented individually and information relating to population, household types, employment and education levels has been presented.

With regard to more general information, all of the SAPS have been collated and presented below in order to give an overall picture of the nature of the communities in

which the Garda Special Projects are located. However, caution must be taken in interpreting these results in the sense that they are based on the 1996 Census.

The absence of a significant male figure in young people's lives as well as the effect of growing up in a one parent family have both been outlined (in Section Two) as extremely important factors in identifying young people 'at risk'. The literature reviewed outlined that research studies have shown that children who live in single parent or step-parent families are more at risk of offending than those who live with both natural parents. The Table below outlines the aggregate number of one parent family households headed by women for each of the areas;

Table 3.2: Number of one-parent families headed by women

Project location	Number of one parent families headed by women
Tralee, Co. Kerry	654
Navan	418
Waterford County Borough	1439
County Sligo	1462
Cork County Borough, Shanakeil	126
Dublin County Borough Priorswood DED	318
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown DED	22
South Dublin, Tallaght Jobstown DED	487
Merchants Quay DED	191
Galway County Borough, Ballybane DED	190

Source: CSO, SAPS, 1996

According to the Table above, the number of lone mothers in both Waterford and Sligo seem relatively higher compared with the figures for the rest of the areas. However, when the proportion of lone mothers to the size of the actual populations in each of the areas is compared we find that 3 areas in Dublin – Darndale, Merchant's Quay and Tallaght have the highest percentage of lone mother households – 8.4%, 8.3% and 7% respectively. The SAPS for the numbers of lone father households in each of the areas in 1996 was considerably smaller in comparison. For instance, 1.7% of all households in Sligo were headed by father only, followed by 0.6% in Waterford, Navan and Kerry.

The Table below provides details on the numbers of children living in one-parent households in 1996.

Table 3.3 Number of children living in one-parent families

Project location	No. of children living in lone mother households	No. of children living in lone father households
Tralee, Co. Kerry	1261	204
Navan	855	144
Waterford County Council	2738	392
County Sligo	2660	588
Cork County Borough, Shanakeil	311	53
Dublin County Borough Priorswood DED	810	29
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown DED	41	6
South Dublin, Tallaght Jobstown DED	1261	75
Merchants Quay DED	355	25
Gaway County Borough, Ballybane DED	426	52

Source: CSO, SAPS, 1996

Indeed, the above Table clearly shows that the number of children in single headed households headed by women is proportionately higher than those headed only by men. Indeed, this situation may have dramatically changed in the past five years since the last Census and it will be interesting to see the statistics with regard to the composition of families following the next Census of the Population. The Final Report of the Commission on the Family (1998) states that over one in six families are headed by a lone parent; 130,000 out of 806,800 families. In a substantial number of these families the children are grown up, but the figure indicates that somewhere in the region of 72,500 families, headed by a lone parent, have children under age twenty.

Figures on the numbers of young people residing in the catchment areas in which the Projects included in the study were located was also examined and have been presented in the Table below.

Table 3.4: Number of young people in areas where projects are located

Project location	No of Pre-adolescents (aged 10-14 years)	No. of adolescents (aged 15-19 years)	Total
Tralee, Co. Kerry	1636	2040	3676
Navan	1233	1149	2382
Waterford County Borough	3384	4194	7578
County Sligo	5064	5277	10341
Cork County Borough, Shanakiel	417	504	921
Dublin County Borough Priorswood DED	429	349	778
Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown DED	64	88	152
South Dublin, Tallaght Jobstown DED	1017	873	1890
Merchants Quay DED	125	143	268
Galway County Borough, Ballybane DED	601	591	1192

Source: CSO, SAPS, 1996

This gives some indication of the actual numbers of young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years who reside in the areas where Projects are located. Of course not all of these young people would be targeted by the Projects. With regard to the SAPS the age ranges of young people have been categorised into pre-adolescents (those aged 10-14 years) and adolescence (those aged 15-19 years) and these have been presented in the Table below. It is important to remember the different sizes of the populations for which SAPS are presented (as outlined above).

More detailed discussion relating to the SAPS for each of the areas where projects included in the study are located is provided in Appendix B.

3.3.2 Individual and focus group interviews with young people

In total, 110 young people were involved in individual interviews. An additional 20 young people were also involved in focus groups, which brings the total sample of young people included in this study to 130.

Young people's responses from the interviews are presented below under a range of headings. Every effort has been made to ensure that the identity of young people can not be identified. Therefore, specific details relating particularly to individual quotes have, for the most part, not been included.

Background Information

Of the total 110 young people included in these interviews 73 (66.4%) were male and 37 (33.6%) were female. The table below highlights the spread of ages of the young people included in these interviews. The largest proportion of young people included were between the ages of 13 and 16 years (81; 73.6%).

Table 3.5: Age and gender of young people

Age	Male	Female	Total
10	2	0	2
11	2	1	3
12	4	4	8
13	16	5	21
14	19	4	23
15	15	5	20
16	9	8	17
17	4	8	12
18	2	2	4
Total	73	37	110

The majority of young people interviewed (54.5%) had been attending the Projects for more than 1 year. Of these 23 (20.9%) had been attending for over 2 years. On the other hand, 21 (20%) of the young people had only been attending for less than 3 months. Thirteen (11.8%) young people are reported as attending for 4 to 6 months and 15 (13.6%) had been attending for 7 to months.

Referrals of young people to the Garda Special Projects can be made by various agencies. For instance, these include, Garda Juvenile Liaison Officers, local Gardaí, Probation and Welfare Officers, Home-School Liaison Officers, the Project Co-ordinator and so on. It was interesting to ask young people how they believed they had become involved and their responses highlight the range of sources through which young people were referred. A number of young people also referred to the fact that their friends had been attending the project beforehand. However, there was a very broad range of responses as to why the young people themselves believed they had become involved. These include the following;

'My friends were already in the Project and they kept asking me to join';

'I just came over to the Project and asked if I could join. There was a draw on in the school to see who got into the Project and I got in';

'The Co-ordinator came around on the street and told us about the Project and my friend and I asked if we could join';

'I got into trouble with the Gardai and was sent here to keep me out of trouble';

'I have a brother who comes here who has got into a lot of trouble.... They took me in to keep me out of trouble';

'For getting kicked out of school';

'Getting into trouble on the roads with the Gardai'.

The young people were also asked to describe in their own words what they thought the project was about. With regard to the 20 young people who took part in focus group interviews, all of them felt that the project(s) provided them with support. The types of support that they referred to related to learning new skills, providing them with somebody who they could feel comfortable talking to about their problems, providing a network of friendship and encouraging them to do well. All of the young people also felt that the Project(s) provided them with friendship and this was regarded as one of the most important functions of the project(s). Their responses included the following;

'Yes, we all get on well together and work together as team mates';

'Yes, you know that there are other young people and staff here that you can talk to';

'Yes definitely. We've met a few people in here and you get to know everyone that is involved';

'Friendship is very important – you need someone you can trust and who can give you support.

A number of young people involved in individual interviews felt that the Project(s) helped to keep them out of trouble and 'off the streets'. However, differences in opinions across projects were apparent depending on the types of activities the young people were involved with through the project. Only one young person referred to

the fact that the Gardaí were involved in the provision of the Project. Their responses included the following;

'It keeps me out of trouble for a few hours every week';

'Its mostly about getting together with friends and having a good time';

'Its about getting young people back on track and keeping them out of trouble';

'Its really good. I have benefited a lot and would never have done some of these activities before. The leader is really nice';

'The courses they do here are really good... you have to have money to do other courses but you can do the stuff here for free. You can have a laugh and it keeps you off the streets'.

Out of the total 130 young people included in the overall sample, only one young person referred to the aims of the project (outlined in Section One of the report) with regard to enhancing the employability and labour market participation of the project participants. S/he said;

'Get us jobs – that's why we're here – to get jobs.... or to go back and do the Junior Cert'.

The young people involved in the focus groups were divided in their opinions on whether they thought that the Gardaí should be actively involved with the Projects. The comments of those who felt that it wasn't a good idea included the following;

'We don't associate with the Gardaí... if they are involved we don't get involved with the Projects.... We don't like them';

'I don't like them, it probably would be a bad thing. I wouldn't like to have them involved and I wouldn't feel comfortable';

'It would be a bad thing because we don't like them and we wouldn't get involved with the projects if they were involved';

Some of those who felt that it was a good idea and one young person said the following:

'Yes, its good. Its stops other young people from causing trouble – we don't get into trouble if they are here – they teach you not to'.

The young people's opinions of the areas where they lived

The responses from the young people with regard to the areas where they lived generally reflected the lack of facilities for young people in the area. The young people described the areas where they lived as 'rough' in the sense that a lot of fighting, joy riding and/or drug taking and drinking went on. Of the small number of young people who said that they like the areas where they lived most referred to the people in the area and particularly their friends. Some of the young people's responses included the following;

'It's okay, but very rough and messy. I like the youth project and the school facilities... I don't like the people that live around here though';

'Its not the best – there's lots of rubbish around and its very rough ... I wouldn't move though';

Most of the teenagers here are into drinking and smoking out of boredom. The Gardai are always hassling us because we're sitting around all of the time because we have nothing else to do';

'There's nothing to do, nothing for our age group.... There is only a little kiddie's playground, but the people around here are really nice'.

In the Home Office Consultation Document (1997) the use of leisure time and access to youth facilities were regarded as important factors in influencing the likelihood of offending. The document states that offending for boys is associated with the amount of time they spend away from home and with their friends. In addition, those who spend their leisure time in unstructured and unsupervised activities on the street are more at risk of offending. This has relevance to the responses outlined above by the young people in the sample.

The responses from the young people with regard to the types of things to do in the area reflected a serious lack of facilities and resources in almost all of the areas where projects were located. The young people referred to the fact that they needed money if they wanted to go to the cinema, use a leisure centre or go swimming etc. and that these were things that they could not always afford. Some of their comments included the following;

'There's nothing to do... We can't even get into the community centre because loads of the lads are banned';

'There's nothing... We would be lost without this project, we'd have no where else to go, but too many young people come here';

'We have the youth club in the summer.... There are soccer tournaments and competitions and there are also lots of other sports to do. There would be nothing to do if the youth centre wasn't here'.

When asked if they felt that the project made a difference to young people living in the area, the majority (103; 93.6%) felt that it did make a difference and, as highlighted by their responses above, that without such projects there would be little else to do in the area. Only 6 (5.5%) (of which 5 were males) felt that the project made no difference, with only 1 respondent replying both 'yes' and 'no'. Some of the young people's responses are as follows;

Q; Do you think that the Project makes a difference to the young people living in your area?

'Yes, its boring on the road just hanging around. The project gives us something to do and it gives us support. Its also a chance to meet new people';

'Yes, we don't get bored and at least we are doing something';

'Yes, because I was in a lot of trouble before I joined the Project. I'm not hanging around the streets now...There is lots to do here';

Comments from those that felt the Projects didn't really make a difference (6 young people in total) included;

'It doesn't really make a difference, but it gives us somewhere to go, but when we leave the Project we just go straight back to hanging around the street';

'It doesn't help to keep us out of trouble and we don't get to come to the Project often enough';

Young people's lifestyles

The aim of this section of the report was to focus on the types of structured activities that young people were involved in outside of their involvement with the Project. For instance, this included whether or not they were involved in sports, whether or not

they had any particular hobbies and any other projects, clubs or organisations that he/she was a member of.

Table 3.7 below outlines the number of boys and girls who said that they were involved in sport. Eighty-one (73.6%) said that they did take part in sports while 29 (26.4) said they did not (of which 13 were male and 16 were female).

Table 3.6: Involvement of young people in sports by gender

Number of sports	Male	Female	Total
1	18	6	24
2	14	7	21
3	12	5	17
4	10	2	12
5 or more	6	1	7

Seventy-five (68.2%) of the young people said that they had some type of hobby, while 35 (31.8%) said that they had not. Computers and computer games were by far the most popular hobby of the young people included in the sample. Music and reading were also popular responses. Other hobbies listed also included cars, motorbikes and drawing/art.

Fifty-one (46.4%) young people said that they were involved with other clubs, groups or organisations. However, the majority 59 (53.6%) said that they were not. This corresponds with the fact that many young people felt that there were very few resources/facilities in their area targeted at young people. It is also interesting to note that 38.5% of young people who were involved with other groups/organisations had been involved for over 3 years and 33% had been involved for over a year. The fact that 53.6% of young people were involved in no other groups/organisations indicates that the Projects play an important role in attracting young people who are not involved in any other structured activities within the community.

Whether or not the young people in the sample had part time jobs was reported on. The majority (65; 59.1%) of young people included in the sample reported having part-time jobs. Forty-three (39.1%) reported that they did not have part-time jobs, while 2 (1 male and 1 female) (1.8%) respondents worked full-time. It is interesting to note that over half (54%) of all of the girls included in the sample reported that they

had a part-time job, while only 31.5% of all males had a job. However, when we look closely at the nature of the part-time employment we find that it tends to be very informal with a lot of this type of work being carried out for family members. For instance, babysitting was the most popular response (18; 41.9%), with 14 of the total 18 respondents being female. In addition, when one looks at the age of the young people who said that they were involved in some type of part-time work we find that only 18 are over the age of 16 years. The informal nature of the work is perhaps highlighted by the fact that children as young as 11, 12 and 13 years said that they worked part-time, of whom all said that they received some sort of financial payment.

Education

The 1998 *Annual School Leavers Survey of 1996/1997 Leavers* by the ESRI shows that 81% of pupils left school with a Leaving Certificate qualification, 15.5% of pupils left school with a Junior Certificate qualification and 3.5% left school with no qualification (cited in the *National Children's Strategy, Executive Summary*, 2000). The *National Children's Strategy* (2000) also highlights the fact that in recent years resources have been targeted at the problem of early school leaving, but to date there has been no significant improvement in the numbers leaving school with a Leaving Certificate qualification. Despite this, Ireland is above the EU average for those who have successfully completed at least upper secondary education.

This section of the interview began by asking the young people whether or not they felt that education was important. One hundred and six (96.4%) young people felt that it was important, while only 4 (3.6%) felt that it was not.

The young people who participated in focus group interviews were asked whether or not they felt that school was important in helping them to stay out of trouble. All of the young people said that they felt that it was important and some of their comments included the following;

'School is very important – if you stay in school and do your Leaving Cert. You wouldn't be getting into much trouble. Not a lot of young people around here stay on in school to do their Leaving Cert. Most young people want to leave school to get a job and earn some money';

‘Yes, its important, but young people who are getting into trouble will probably drop out anyway. Nobody, like their family and friends, really cares if they do or not’;

‘School is a very important..... if you leave school you’re just going to go down hill (comment from a young person who left school in first year and has consistently been in trouble);

Ninety-four (85.5%) of the young people in the sample were attending school, while 16 (14.5%) were not. However, a number of the young people who were attending said that they did not like school mainly due to the fact that ‘it was boring’, ‘there was too much work’ and/or they ‘didn’t get on with the teachers’. These findings correspond with those of the Youth Lifestyles Survey (YLS) (1998/99). In relation to school, the findings from the YLS similarly show that majority of the young people sampled were found to like school. However, it was found that it was those young people who did not like school who were most likely to be offenders. The relationship between dissatisfaction with school and offending was strongest amongst 12-16 years. Boys of this age who did not like school were three times as likely to offend (31%) than those who liked school (9%). Girls who did not like school were four times as likely to be offenders (20% compared to 5%). Of the 16 young people in this sample who were not attending school, 6 were girls.

The young people were also asked how long they would continue on in school. The following table outlines their responses;

Table 3.7: How long young people wish to stay on in school

	Frequency	%
Junior Certificate	30	27.3
Leaving Certificate	61	55.5
Don’t know	2	1.8
By the end of this year	1	.9
NA	16	14.5
Total	110	100.0

Just over fifty-five per cent said that they would like to complete their Leaving Certificate, while 30 (27.3%) say that they would stay to complete their Junior Certificate. The majority of all girls in the sample (29; 78.4%) said that they would stay to complete their Leaving Certificate. 5.4% of all the girls in the sample said that

they would stay in school only to complete their Junior Certificate compared with a much larger proportion of boys (38.4%).

On finishing school, a large proportion (43; 39.1%) of young people reported that they would seek employment, while 28 (25.5%) said that they would like to continue on to third level education. Apprenticeships were favoured by 18 respondents (all of whom were male with the exception of 1). Of those young people who said that they would seek employment on completion of school (43), 37 (86%) were male. In contrast, of the young people who said that they hoped to continue on to third level education, 8 (28.5%) were male, compared to 20 (71.5%) females.

The young people were also asked if they often missed days from school. Sixty (54.5%) said that they did not miss school very often. Further details of the young people's responses are provided in Table 3.11 below;

Table 3.8: Would you often miss days from school?

	Frequency	%
Not very often	60	54.5
At least once every 2 weeks	10	9.1
At least once a week	10	9.1
Very often	14	12.7
NA	16	14.5
Total	110	100.0

As highlighted above, 14 (12.7%) of the young people interviewed said that they would miss days from school very often. A range of reasons were given as to why the young people might miss days from school, the most frequent (54; 49.1%) reason cited was 'being sick'. Other reasons given as to why the young people might miss school included 'slept in' (10; 9.1%), 'couldn't be bothered going' (9; 8.2%), or 'its boring' (2; 1.8%).

Of the 110 respondents, 16 had left school. These young people were asked a number of specific questions relating to the reasons why they had left school, their plans for returning to school and so on. Cited below are the number of the reasons given as to why these young people had left school;

'I didn't like it – I just wanted to get a job';

‘Things at home got in the way’;

‘I was kicked out of school - I was suspended and they wouldn’t let me back in...’

‘I left because of a drink/drugs problem’.

Of the 16 young people who were not attending school, 11 had not completed any examinations (Junior or Leaving Certificate) before they had finished school. The 5 young people who had completed examinations had completed their Junior Certificate only. The young people were also asked if they had any plans to return to school and only half (8) said that they had planned to return to school.

These young people were also asked what they had been doing since they had stopped attending school and they gave some of the following replies; working as an apprentice, attending Youth Reach, in rehab and working on and off.

Friends and Family

The largest proportion of young people (58; 52.8%) interviewed were currently residing with their families (both mother and father). However, a total of 43 (39.1%) were living in single parent households – 39 (35.5 %) were living with mother only (and siblings) and 4 (3.6%) were living with father only (and siblings). The Table below shows the young people responses in greater detail;

Table 3.9: Who are you currently living with?

	Frequency	%
Family	58	52.8
Mother and siblings	39	35.5
Father and siblings	4	3.6
Grandparents	1	.9
Brothers and sisters	1	.9
Friends	1	.9
Mother and step parents and siblings	2	1.8
In group home/residential care	2	1.8
Foster parents	1	.9
With guardian	1	.9
Total	110	100.0

The Table below outlines the family structure of young people in the sample. Family structure in this instance refers largely to the marital status of the parents, but also to whether or not parents are deceased. The Table shows that while the largest proportion of parents are married (53; 48.2%), the proportion of parents who are separated is also quite large (39; 35.5%).

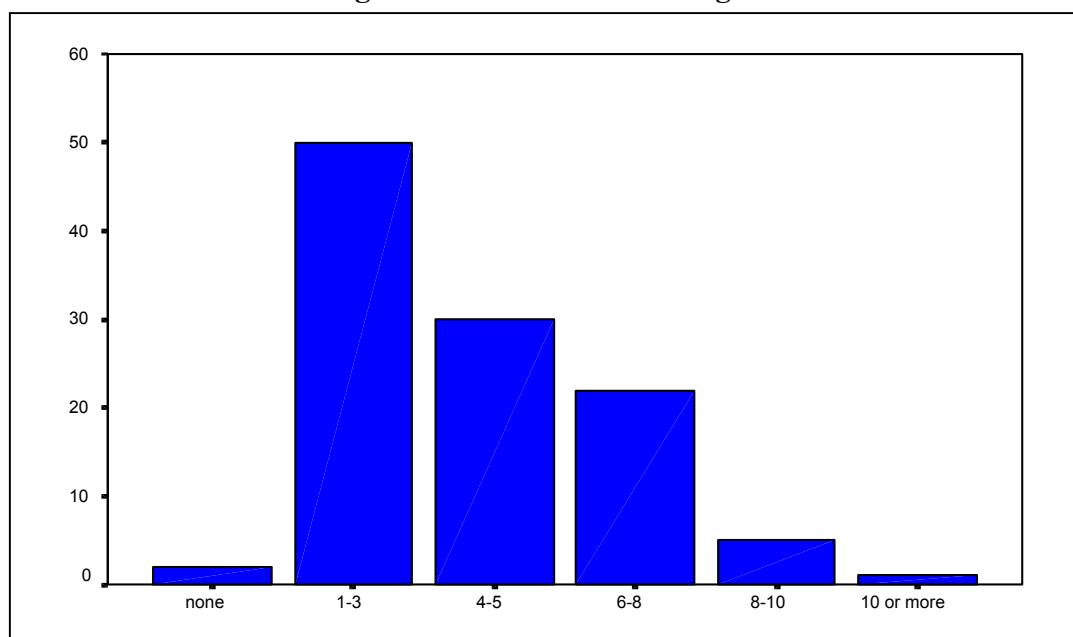
Table 3.10: Family structure

	Frequency	%
Married	53	48.2
Living together	4	3.6
Separated	39	35.5
Divorced	1	.9
Deceased	6	5.5
Not married and not living together	4	3.6
No answer	3	2.7
Total	110	100.0

Findings from the Youth Lifestyles Survey (1998/1999) indicated that those young people who lived in two parent families had lower levels of serious or persistent offending than those living in either lone parent families or stepfamilies. Among both males and females, those living in stepfamilies had high levels of offending. Boys living in lone parent families also had high levels of offending though girls did not.

The chart below outlines the numbers of brothers and sisters reported for of the young people in the sample. Fifty-two (47.3%) of the young people reported that they had more than 4 siblings. This was followed by 50 (45.5%) of young people who said they had 1-3 siblings.

Figure 3.1: Number of siblings



Ninety-nine (90%) young people said that they were happy with their current living arrangements, while 11 (10%) said that they were not.

All of the young people involved in focus group interviews generally felt that their families also provided them with the support that they needed to stay out of trouble. The young people were more divided in their opinions with regard to whether or not friends could influence them with regard to staying out of trouble and felt that it was really up to themselves to stay out of trouble. These findings are consistent with results presented in the Youth Lifestyles Survey (YLS) (1998/1999). The YLS found a significant relationship between offending behaviour and having family members, friends or neighbours who had been in trouble with the police. Having friends who offended had the greatest effects on offending for young people included in the YLS. In addition, it was also found that having neighbours and family who were offended also had a significant association with the likelihood of being a serious or persistent offender but the effect was less than having delinquent friends.

Family and Friends

The largest proportion (65; 59.1%) of young people reported having 4 or more close friends. The Table below outlines the number of close friends that young people

reported to have. The data is analysed in relation to the gender of respondents. It shows that a larger percentage of girls (16.2%) reported as having no close friends as compared with 8.2% of all boys.

Table 3.11: Number of close friends by gender

	Male	Female
None	6	0
1	3	4
2 or 3	18	14
4 or more	46	19
Total	73	37

Ninety-five (86.4%) of the sample said that their close friends lived locally. Ten (9.1%) said that they did not.

The young people were also asked to rate their relationships with significant others on a scale of 1 (very good) to 5 (very bad). The results have been summarised in the Table below;

Table 3.12: How well do you get along with others?

	Very good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very bad	N/A	Total
Brothers	37	25	18	7	4	19	110
Sisters	32	37	19	3	3	16	110
Teachers	9	25	37	16	16	7	110
Mother	71	24	9	2	0	4	110
Father	52	30	8	1	3	16	110
Grandparents	54	26	9	2	1	18	110
Co/ordinator/ Staff	69	31	9	0	1	0	110

The table shows that generally the young people tended to get on quite well with their siblings – a majority of the respondents said that they got on ‘very good’ or ‘good’ or ‘okay’ with their brothers and sisters. With regard to their relationship with teachers the data is more spread out across the scale. The majority (37) felt that they got on ‘okay’ with their teachers, while 31 young people felt that they got on ‘bad’ or very bad’ with their teachers.

Next, the young people were asked who was the most important person in their life. As highlighted above, the majority (51; 46.4%) of the respondents said that their mother was the most important person in their lives, followed by 25 (22.7%) who said

both their parents and 10 (9.1%) who said their father. The Table below presents the young people's responses by gender;

Table 3.13: Who is the most important person in your life?

	Male	Female
Both parents	18	7
Mother	31	20
Father	6	4
Brother	1	1
Sister	2	1
Can't tell - all family & friends	3	1
Me	2	0
Family	4	2
Friends	2	1
Grandparent	3	0
Priest	1	0
Total	73	37

The above Table shows that 54% of all girls included in the sample said that the most important person in their life was their mother. This is compared with 42.5% of boys. A larger percentage of boys to girls choose both parents – 24.6% to 18.9% respectively. Other significant people in the young peoples lives included friends and family generally, grand parents and a priest. Some of the young people's comments included the following:

'My mother – because she looked after me and she raised me on her own';

'My mother because she's the only one who really cares. If I get into trouble with the Gardaí she's always there and won't let me go to prison';

'My mother, because she's looked after me and never ran away from me or anything';

'The only important thing in my life is my family and friends';

History of offending

Sixty-five (59.1%) young people said that they had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí. Forty-five (40.9%) said that they had not. The following Table shows young peoples responses in relation to their age.

Table 3.14: The age of young people and whether or not they had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí

Age	Have you ever been in trouble with the Gardaí?	
	Yes	No
10	1	1
11	2	1
12	6	2
13	10	11
14	16	7
15	11	9
16	10	7
17	6	6
18	3	1
Total	65	45

From the Table above it appears that the largest number of young people who said that they had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí are between the ages of 13 and 16 years.

The responses of the young people included in focus group interviews, when asked why they felt young people living in their area got into trouble included;

‘The lads around here who get into trouble show off and try to pick on you. Its easy enough to stay out of trouble if you want to but there would be a lot of trouble on the streets, like drinking and fighting, so you just have to stay away from it’;

‘It starts off with drinking and this leads on to other things, but its what everyone does around here – there’s nothing else to do – its what all the young people in the area do. Young people around here start a lot of fights when they are drinking’.

When asked what they thought were the best ways of trying to keep young people out of trouble they referred generally to giving young people clubs and activities and generally lots of things to do. Their responses included the following;

‘By giving them sports and activities to become involved in’;

‘It’s up themselves – if they want to stay out of trouble they will’;

‘More projects or clubs like this should be set up for young people’.

The Table below outlines the range of behaviours for young people who had reported previously been in trouble with the Gardaí. It shows that 14 young people had been in trouble for stealing and 11 for robbing cars, vans and bikes. Eleven young people said that they had been involved in more than one of the behaviours listed.

Table 3.15: What have you been in trouble with the Gardaí for?

	Frequency	%
Robbing cars/vans/bikes	11	10.0
Stealing	14	12.7
Smashing windows	9	8.2
Searched by Gardaí	1	0.9
Arson	3	2.7
Hanging around	3	2.7
Drinking alcohol	2	1.8
No insurance on motorbike	1	0.9
Not being in school	1	0.9
Assault	2	1.8
Breaking and entering	1	.9
In robbed car	2	1.8
Fighting	1	.9
More than one of the above	11	10.0
Can't say	9	8.2
N/A	39	35.5
Total	110	100.0

During the interview the young people were presented with a list of behaviours and asked if they had been involved in any of those listed. They were asked to rate the extent to which they might have been involved on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = never, 2 = once or twice, 3 = a few times, 4 = very often). The frequency with which young people were involved in the range of behaviours presented is outlined in the Table below.

Table 3.16: Frequency of involvement in anti-social behaviours

	Never	Once or twice	A few times	Very often	Total
Skipped school	45	27	26	12	110
Was suspended from school	54	26	20	10	110
Was expelled from school	92	11	5	2	110
Drank alcohol	41	28	27	14	110
Took drugs, e.g. cannabis	73	17	13	7	110
Stolen anything from a shop/supermarket, etc.	51	31	17	11	110
Written or sprayed graffiti on walls, buses, etc.	55	30	15	10	110
Hurt someone with some type of weapon, e.g. knife, stick, etc.	73	20	13	4	110
Run away from home	90	13	5	2	110
Joyriding	85	20	3	2	110

It is clear from the Table that the number of young people who said that they were frequently involved (very often) with the types of behaviours presented was quite small. The largest proportion of young people who said that they were involved frequently in these types of behaviours related to young people who said that they drank alcohol very often (14; 12.8%). The table shows that of all of the behaviours presented above, the highest number of young people (69) reported to having previously drank alcohol, whether this was ‘once or twice’, ‘a few times’ or ‘very often’. Following the use of alcohol, over half of young people in the sample also reported being involved in the following behaviours to some degree - skipping school (65), previously stolen from a shop/supermarket (59), being suspended from school (56) and written or sprayed graffiti (55).

The highest ‘never’ response was from those young people who said they had never been expelled from school (92), followed by those who had never run away from home (90) and those who had never been involved in joyriding. In addition, 73 young people said that they had never hurt someone with some type of weapon or taken drugs. The smallest number of young people (41) who gave a ‘never’ response said that they had never drank alcohol.

Following alcohol consumption, the table above shows that 12 young people said that they had skipped school under the 'very often' response, followed by 11 young people who reported frequently stealing from a shop or supermarket, 10 respondents who had been suspended from school and 10 who reported having written or sprayed graffiti on walls, buses, etc.

A high, seventy-four (67.3%) young people said that their friends had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí. This finding is again consistent with that of the Youth Lifestyles Survey (1998/1999) where a strong correlation was found between the offending behaviour of the individual young people and the offending behaviours of their peers. Fifty-one young people categorised these as their close friends. Of the 65 respondents who said that they had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí, 58 said that their friends had also been in trouble. Of the 45 young people who said that they had never been in trouble with the Gardaí, 29 said that their friends had never been in trouble either. The researcher found that the young people were very reluctant to say why their friends had previously been in trouble. Fifty-four young people gave no answer when asked. Sixty-two (56.4%) young people also reported that someone close to them had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí.

In the focus groups interviews, the young people were asked how they felt the Project(s) could help to keep young people within the community out of trouble. In response to this, the young people felt that the value of the project in aiming to keep young people out of trouble was in the fact that it gave young people somewhere to go. As in the individual interviews, the young people involved in the focus groups also referred to the general lack of facilities and things to do for young people in their age group in the area(s).

Hopes for the future

The final section of the interview focused on the young people's hopes for the future. When asked what their hopes were for the future the majority of the young people said that they would like to get a good job, 'to be rich' and/or to have a family.

It is interesting to note that 62 (56.4%) young people said that they would live in the same community when they were older, while 42 (38.2%) said they would not and 6

young people said that they didn't know. This is in contrast with the young people's views of the areas where they lived. Only a small number of young people are reported as having said that they liked the area where they lived yet the majority (56.4%) said that they would like to live there in the future.

In relation to the young people's future hopes for their future participation in the Garda Special Projects, young people who took part in the focus group interviews were asked to make 5 suggestions that would make the Project(s) better for them. Interestingly, all of their comments related to the provision of more activities/ or the provision of better resources to facilitate activities. These included, a soccer pitch, a basketball/tennis court, somewhere to watch videos, table tennis, pool tables and so on. Only one group of girls involved in the focus groups related to the need to provide more educational facilities for young people, with regard to helping them to stay out of trouble. However, they also felt that it very important to significantly increase the number and nature of the activities available to the young people.

3.4. Summary of key findings

The aim of this Section of the report was to present the findings of the research with regard to the data collected in relation to the young people. Three data sources were used for the purpose of gaining relevant information – Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS), individual structured interviews and focus group interviews. The key risk factors identified from this data with regard to current participants of Garda Special Projects are presented in the final section of this report. A summary of the key findings of the research with regard to participants of Garda Special Projects has been presented below.

Demographic Area Profiles

- The numbers of one-parent households in almost all of the areas where projects are located were above the national average. These households were mostly headed by women;
- In addition, the number of households with 4 or more children also tended to be slightly higher than the national average in the majority of areas and the oldest children in households tended to fall into the 10-19 age range. There

tended to be high proportions of families with young children in particular areas, for instance, in Cork, Kerry, Dublin – Merchant’s Quay and Jobstown, Tallaght;

- Unemployment rates in the areas where Projects were located tended to be high when compared with national averages. For instance, in Cork, the rate was 12% (all of whom defined themselves as being unemployed, as well as a further 9% who said that they were unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability). Dependency on income maintenance in such areas would obviously tend to be very high;
- Early school leaving in the areas where projects were located also tended to be relatively high compared with the national average. For instance, in the Dublin Priorswood area the highest level of education achieved for 38% of the population was primary school education, while 37% had reached lower secondary school (obtained their Junior Certificate) and 7% had completed their Leaving Certificate;
- The majority of young people in the sample referred to the general lack of facilities and investment in resources in the areas where they lived. In this sense, the young people regarded the Projects as extremely important in that the Projects gave them somewhere safe to meet their friends, to become involved in a range of activities and to feel supported within this environment.

Young People’s Lifestyles

- Young people included in the sample tended not to be very physically active and did not tend to be involved in many structured activities. While a large proportion (73.6%) of the young people said that they were involved in sports the majority of these were involved in only one or two sports (55%);
- The young people tended not to be heavily involved in structured sporting activities and very few reported being members of particular sporting clubs. The young people’s non-involvement in such clubs might be indicative of the general lack of resources and facilities for the young people in these areas. Indeed the young people generally referred to the sports they would partake in either as part of their involvement in the Garda Special Projects or in school (where appropriate);

- Significantly, 16 (43.2%) girls in the sample said that they did not take part in any sports;
- While 68.2% of the young people (both boys and girls) in the sample said that they had some type of hobby, 31.8% said they had not. The hobbies cited by the young people tended not to be very active or sports based. Rather, the most popular hobbies reported by the young people included computers and computer games as well as music and reading;
- The majority of the young people (53.6%) said that they were not involved in any other clubs, organisations or groups (sporting or otherwise);
- Fourteen (13%) young people said that they frequently drank alcohol, while 28 (25.5%) said that they had drunk alcohol only once or twice and 27 (24.5%) responded that they had drunk alcohol a few times. A smaller proportion of the sample (41; 37.3%) said that they had never drunk alcohol before;
- Only 2 respondents in the sample reported having full-time jobs, while 65 (59%) young people reported having some type of part-time job. However, the nature of the young people's part-time employment tended to be very informal – for instance 18 (41.9%) said that they were involved in babysitting. In addition only 18 of the respondents who said that they were involved in part-time work were over the age of 16 years. The informal nature of the work undertaken by these young people is perhaps also highlighted by the fact that children as young as 11, 12 and 13 years said that they worked part-time.

Education

- Only 4 young people in the sample felt that education was not important. The reasons why the rest of the young people felt that it was important was in order to get a good job in the future and to earn money when they got older;
- The majority of the sample were currently attending school (85.5%), with very little difference in current attendance between boys and girls;
- In relation to how relationships with teachers were defined, 37 young people felt that they had 'okay' relationships with their teachers, while 31 felt that they had 'bad' or 'very bad' relationships with their teachers;
- Just over 55% of the sample said that they would like to stay in school to complete their Leaving Certificate. It is interesting to note, however, that the largest number of girls in the sample (29; 78.4%) said that they would stay in

- school to complete their Leaving Certificate. Only 5.4% of all the girls in the sample said that they would stay in school only to complete their Junior Certificate compared with a much larger proportion of boys (38.4%);
- Forty-three (39.1%) young people said that when they finished school they planned to seek employment. A quarter of the sample, however, said that they would like to continue on to third level education. When analysed by gender, we find that of the young people who said that they would seek employment, 37 (50.6%) were male and only 6 (16.2%) were female. In contrast, the majority of girls (20; 54%) reported that they hoped to continue on to third level education compared with only 8 (11%) boys;
 - 16 young people or 14.5% of the sample were not attending school. Of these 10 were boys and 6 were girls. Eleven of the young people had not completed their Junior Certificate. The 5 remaining young people had completed junior second level only (as far as Junior Certificate). In addition, only half of these young people said that they had plans to return to school.

Family and Friends

- The likelihood of living in a single-parent household for the young people included in the sample was high (43; 39.1%), with the majority of the young people living in single-parent households headed by women. While a largest proportion of parents in the sample (48.2%) were married, the proportion of parents who were separated was also quite large (35.5%);
- A large proportion (52; 47.3%) of the young people included in the sample also lived in households with more than 4 siblings;
- The most significant relationship in the young people's lives tended to be the relationship that they had with their mother, with 51 (46.4%) young people responding that their mother was the most important person in their lives. Both parents were also regarded as very important by 25 (22.7%) of young people;
- Grandparents were also found to play a very significant and supportive role in the young person's lives. Eighty (87%) young people in the sample said that they got on 'well' or 'very well' with their grandparents;

History of Offending

- Sixty-five (59.1%) young people in the total sample said that they had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí, and the largest number of these young people were between the ages of 13 and 16 years of age;
- A range of reasons was reported by the young people as to why they had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí. The most frequent responses included stealing or robbing cars/vans/bikes, smashing windows, arson and 'hanging around'. Nine young people did not respond and 11 young people reported being involved in more than one of the behaviours listed;
- Only 6 young people said that they had no close friends at all. Significantly, 5 of these young people had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí;
- Of the young people who said that they had 4 or more close friends (65; 59%), 41 are reported as having previously been in trouble with the Gardaí, while 24 said that they had not;
- Seventy-four (67.3%) young people said that their friends had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí, and for the majority of young people (51) these were close friends. Of the 65 respondents who said that they had previously been in trouble, 58 (89.2%) said that they had friends who had also been in trouble with the Gardaí;
- Sixty-two (56.4%) young people also reported having someone 'close to them' who had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí.

SECTION FOUR

Provider's Responses

4.1 Introduction

This Section of the report focuses on the responses of service providers with regard to the identification of 'risk factors' and the target group of the Garda Special Projects. Responses from a range of personnel involved in service provision have been collated and presented below. These include responses from a number of Project Co-ordinators from Projects included in this study as well as a number of Garda personnel who are involved with young people through these Projects. An outline of the questionnaires completed by both Project Co-ordinators and Gardaí working within the community are presented in Appendices E and F.

In addition, interviews were also conducted with representatives from national Garda and youth organisations. In addition, an informal group discussion also took place with a Project Co-ordinator, a Garda Sergeant and a Community Garda. The general focus of these interviews was on the role of the Special Projects, the importance of identifying and targeting risk factors in the young people's lives, problems facing the youth work in general and suggestions/recommendations with regard to future service provision.

The responses received from the range of personnel involved in interviews have been presented below under a number of headings.

4.2 Presentation of Results

4.2.1 The identification of social problems

The types of environment or community in which the young people grow up and reside have been identified in previous Sections as an important risk factor requiring consideration. Project Co-ordinators and Gardaí were asked to describe the communities in which the Projects were located with regard to prevalent social issues/problems. These have already been outlined in greater detail in the previous

Section. However, it was felt important that service providers had the opportunity to express their views with regard to their everyday experiences of working with this group of young people. The types of issues or problems that were identified by service providers across areas were very similar and reinforce the ideas that these areas are homogenous in many of the characteristics that they share. The responses included some of the following; high youth populations, the lack of youth facilities in the area, high unemployment rates, high levels of dependency on social welfare, local authority housing, large numbers of one-parent families, the lack of 'significant males' in the young people's lives, high levels of anti-social behaviour/intimidation; e.g. the availability of drugs, groups harassing residents, etc, the lack of parental support, high levels of early school leaving and the physical state of the houses/community in which the young people live.

Indeed, the responses received above are consistent with those outlined in previous sections of this report. The literature reviewed on risk factors highlighted the impact of structural factors, such as unemployment, early school leaving, low income and poor housing conditions, on the lives of the young people living in particular communities. In Section Three, the review of Small Area Population Statistics (SAPS) also outlines the high number of one parent families and high unemployment rates in these areas, relative to national figures, as well the high numbers of young people living in these areas, particularly between 10 and 19 years of age. The young people's responses are also consistent with the views outlined above. In particular, young people referred to the lack of facilities for young people in general.

The range of problems/issues that have been identified are multifaceted and inter-linked. A clear cycle of disadvantage exists with regard to the types of social problems faced by this group of young people within their communities and the fundamental impact that these will have or already has had on their lives. With regard to types of facilities that existed for young people within their communities, it was generally felt that where services did exist they were limited and inadequate in meeting the needs of the young people for whom they catered. One respondent said that many of the young people felt very unwelcome in the local leisure centre and that the local football pitches had been closed because of damage caused by joy riding.

Other respondents referred to the inadequacy of community facilities to house youth projects, e.g. the lack of clean and adequate toilet facilities, suitable space and so on.

Within this context, the respondents were asked to outline what they thought were the principal aims of the Garda Special Projects. The respondents referred to the aim of the Projects to identify young people at risk within the community, to help to 'break the cycle' and to prevent young people from entering the criminal justice system when they are older. No respondent referred to the aims of the project in enhancing the employability prospects of the young people with whom they work.

4.2.2 The needs of the young people attending Garda Special Projects

The needs of the young people who attended the Projects were regarded as complex and varied and included some of the following;

- The need for a safe environment in which the young people can spend their time constructively;
- The need for positive role models;
- The need for opportunities to have fun and to learn and experience new things;
- The need for education, e.g. health education, social skills development;
- The need for support and the provision of counselling;
- The need for the promotion of parental support and involvement in the young people's lives.

4.2.3 The needs of families

The importance of the family is well documented. For instance, the Commission on the Family (1996) stated the following; 'the experience of family living is the single greatest influence on an individual's life[because] it is in the family context that a person's basic emotional needs for security, belongingness, support and intimacy are satisfied' (Commission on the Family, 1996). McKeown (2000) also highlights the fact that in the Irish Constitution the importance of the family is underlined by the fact that the state 'guarantees to protect the family in its constitution and authority, as the necessary basis of social order and as indispensable to the welfare of the nation and the State' (cited in McKeown, 2000).

However, the important role of the family and the positive impact that it can have on the child or young person can be seriously undermined by a number of factors, as outlined in the literature reviewed. These include, parental substance/alcohol abuse, psychological problems of parents, parental separation, living in one-parent families and/or living in large families and living in poverty (Allen 1996, Home Office 1997).

Both Project Co-ordinators and Gardaí were asked to identify the needs of the families of the young people with whom they worked. The needs of families were again identified as multifaceted and requiring a number of inputs with regard to family support issues. One issue raised related to the low levels of responsibility taken by parents for their children's behaviour. One respondent commented that while it is often difficult to engage young people, it is often more difficult to get effective, sustained responses from their parents. In addition, the need to support one-parent families was also highlighted. In particular, it was felt that increased childcare facilities need to be made available for this group.

4.2.4 The availability of complementary youth services in communities

The extent to which complementary services existed varied considerably across areas where projects were located. In one area serviced by a Garda Special Project there were no other services available to young people while, in other areas local youth organisations offered a variety of clubs and activities. However, these were regarded as unequipped for dealing with young people who were deemed 'at risk' of offending. For other Projects, there were an array of other services available, for instance, Barnardo's, Spring Board, CYC Youth Development Officer(s), Traveller Youth Project, Foroige Youth Project, Foroige Area Development Programme and so on.

Whether or not other services were provided all of the respondents felt that there was a definite need for other (additional) services within the area where the Garda Special projects were located. In addition, it was also felt that there was a greater need for services to work together and pool resources, where services did already exist.

4.2.5 Addressing risk factors in the young people's lives

Respondents were asked to identify the 'risk factors' that they felt contributed to the offending behaviour of the young people that they worked with. As outlined above,

these included a range of issues (at both the macro and micro level) including early school leaving, anti-social behaviour (e.g. drug/alcohol consumption, joy riding), lack of facilities and resources, unemployment, family involvement in crime and lack of parental control.

Project Co-ordinators were asked if they felt there were any specific risk factors relevant to gender or ethnicity. The majority of Co-ordinators said that they generally felt that peer pressures and material needs differ for boys and for girls. In addition, a Co-ordinator felt that the majority of girls were more vulnerable to becoming sexually active before the age of 16 years and perhaps more at risk of becoming sexually active or pregnant than of offending. Ethnicity, was not an issue identified by the Co-ordinators as impacting on a day-to-day basis on service delivery, although one Co-ordinator who worked within a community with a large number of Travellers felt that generally ethnic groups in Ireland are at a heightened risk of being involved in race related crimes.

Obstacles to effectively addressing risk factors in young people's lives, as identified by respondents include the following;

- Lack of parental interest and responsibility for young people;
- Lack of facilities for young people and of co-ordination between services;
- Inadequate resources within the Garda Special Projects, inadequate training and so on;
- Lack of early interventions in the family and the children/young people's lives;
- Lack of follow-up by professionals with regard to young people who have been identified as at risk;
- The impact of socio-economic factors.

Recommendations with regard to effectively identifying risk factors in the young people's lives included the following;

- Building close relationships with parents;
- The development of a comprehensive assessment system for those referring young people to the Project;

- The need for multi-disciplinary teamwork across all relevant organisations working with young people; and
- The promotion of ongoing research/evaluation with regard to service providers, families and young people.

Recommendations were also received with regard to tackling risk factors in the young people's lives. These included the need for family interventions, and particularly early intervention and preventative work. The respondent's responses also outlined the need for interdisciplinary teamwork and for working with both the young people and their families. The point was also highlighted that the needs of the young people and their families are often beyond the scope of the Special Projects.

4.3 Summary and Overview

The principle aim of this Section has been to provide an overview of how the issue of identifying and targeting young people 'at risk' within the community can be effectively dealt with within the context of current service provision. The mix of respondents involved in interviews – Project Co-ordinators, Community Gardaí and representatives from national Garda and youth organisations - provides a broad range of views on the identification of obstacles and issues related to the work of the Special Projects.

SECTION FIVE

Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this final Section is to provide a profile of young people who are currently involved in Garda Special Projects based on the sample of young people included in this study.

The profile developed focuses on various aspects of the young people's lives, which include the following;

1. Socio-economic factors, i.e. focusing on the wider community in which the young people reside, e.g. types of housing, unemployment rates, etc;
2. the young people's general life styles;
3. young people's perception of education and their levels of educational attainment;
4. the nature of young people's relationships with family and friends; and
5. history of offending.

The profile has been compiled through the collection and/or analysis of the following data: (a) information from young people themselves on various aspects of their lives as well as their experiences of the Projects, (b) the use of Small Area Population Statistics in relation to the areas where Projects included in this study are located and (c) by the views of service providers within the sector.

5.2 Summary Profile of Participants of Garda Special Projects

Key risk factors identified with regard to participants of Garda Special Projects are based on the examination of various aspects of the young people's lives. In considering this profile the reader is referred particularly to Sections Three and Four of this report in which more detailed discussion of the indicators presented below is provided. The summary profile of the sample of participants of Garda Special Projects included in this study is as follows:

- This research has highlighted the extent to which the majority of areas in which the young people grow up and reside are homogenous, in the sense that they share many of the same characteristics and associated social problems. However, when considering risk factors a number of important variables must be accounted for. The risk indicators identified in this study are regarded as multifaceted and inter-related. A clear cycle of disadvantage exists with regard to the types of social problems faced by this group of young people within their communities;
- Key indicators of risk identified with regard to the communities in which young people live include high youth populations, the general lack of youth facilities and high levels of anti-social behaviour and intimidation;
- In addition, unemployment rates, rates of dependency on social welfare, levels of early school leaving, numbers of one parent families and households with more than four children were above the national average for all of the areas in which Projects included in this study were located;
- This group of young people also have very common needs. These include the needs for safe and structured environments, the need to have fun and to learn and experience new things and the need for positive role models in their lives. Service providers also identified the real need to support and promote parental involvement in the young people's lives;
- Aspirations of educational achievement amongst the young people were low. Although 94 (85.5%) young people in the sample were currently attending school, just over half of these wished to complete their Leaving Certificate. The girls in the sample were more likely to want to complete either Junior or Leaving Certificate when compared to boys. On completion of school boys were more likely to want to seek either an apprenticeship or employment. Higher proportions of girls (71.5%) to boys (8; 28.5%) wished to continue to third level education. Sixty-five young people in the sample had previously been suspended from school;

- Of the 16 young people (10 boys and 6 girls) in the sample who were currently not attending school, 11 had not completed any state examinations. Although this number is small relative to those currently attending school, the Garda Projects clearly have an important role to play in enhancing the future educational/employment aspects of this particular group of young people;
- The extent to which young people can be determined 'at risk' can also be examined by focusing on the young people's familial backgrounds. Research shows that young people living in two-parent households face a lower level than average risk with regard to becoming involved in serious or persistent offending. The majority of young people (58; 52.8%) in this sample currently lived with both parents. Thirty-nine (35.5%) of the young people reported living in single parent households, mostly headed by women;
- Only 10 (9.1%) young people in the sample referred to their father as the most important person in their lives, perhaps indicating the lack of a significant male in the young people's lives;
- The number of young people included in the sample who reported as previously being in trouble with the Gardaí was high (65; 59.1%). The most common reasons why young people had previously been in trouble with Gardaí related to robbing cars/vans/bikes;
- The frequency of young people's involvement in anti-social behaviours was also examined. A high number of young people were reported to having previously drank alcohol (69). Following alcohol use, over half of the sample also reported being involved in the following behaviours to some degree – skipping school (65) and stealing from a shop/supermarket (59);
- Research has a strong correlation between offending behaviour/anti social behaviour of individual young people and that of their peers. Sixty-two (56.4%) young people reported that someone close to them had previously been in trouble with the Gardaí;

5.3 Overview

In light of the recent commitment made in the National Development Plan (2000-2006) to significantly expand Garda Special Projects it is important that any future development of the programme is based on a sound theoretical basis and current research information which adequately addresses user needs and programme aims. For this reason it is proposed that a longitudinal research study needs to be commissioned which could follow a number of young people's entry in to and exit out of Garda Special Projects. This relates to the need to evaluate the work of the Projects with young people 'at risk' over time.

APPENDIX A

BACKGROUND INFORMATION SURVEY

The Centre for Social and Educational Research, located in the Dublin Institute of Technology has been commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to conduct an in-depth examination of risk factors, which could be considered as having contributed to the offending behaviour of young people who are currently participating in a number of Garda Youth Diversion Projects. The research will focus on 150 young people and their parents who are currently involved with 29 Youth Diversion Projects nation wide. An important aspect of the research is that it will ensure confidentiality to all those involved with the study.

The purpose of this short questionnaire is to collect some very basic information on your project in order to facilitate the overall selection of the sample of projects to be involved with the research.

- 1. Where is your project located?**
- 2. Would you describe your project as an urban or rural based service?**
Urban _____
Rural _____
Both _____
- 3. How many young people (approximately) are currently involved with your project?**
- 4. On average, what is the age range of the young people currently involved?**
- 5. Very briefly, could you outline any particular social problems in the catchment area of your Project, which you feel would need to be taken account of in this research?**

6. Do you keep any files/records on the young people?
Yes ___/ No ___

What is the nature of information that is recorded?

Is the same information recorded for every young person involved with your project?

7. Has there been any research studies/evaluations conducted in relation to your particular project? Yes ___/ No ___

If yes, please give details

8. Has there been any general research/evaluations that you know of, that have been conducted locally? Yes ___/ No ___

If yes, please give details

Many thanks for completing this questionnaire

APPENDIX B

Small Area Population Statistic Summaries for each area where Projects included in this Study are located

Sligo

Population:

- ❑ As of the 1996 Census 55,821 people resided in Co. Sligo;
- ❑ The age structure for Sligo was similar to the whole of Ireland with almost one fifth of the total population aged between 10-19 years of age;
- ❑ Approximately **5,000 young people** in Sligo in 1996 **were aged between 10-14 years and 5,277 people between 15-19 years.**

Household types:

- ❑ There were approximately 17,500 households in Sligo and the majority of those were family households;
- ❑ **Nine percent of households were single parent households** (mother and children or father and children) which was slightly above the national average;
- ❑ **Couples with children represented 36% of households**, which was slightly below the national average;
- ❑ On average there were three people living in each household in Sligo (the same as the national average);
- ❑ Of all the households in Sligo with children- the majority (63%) had one or two children whilst 20% had three children;
- ❑ **Seventeen percent** were family **households which had four or more children** which was slightly higher than the national average;
- ❑ Almost one third of family households were classified as 'families where the eldest child is aged 20 years and over'; whilst in 45% of family households the eldest child was aged 10- 19years.

Employment and education:

- ❑ **Forty-seven percent** of the population **over 15 years of age was employed** in 1996; whilst 6% defined themselves as unemployed;
- ❑ Nineteen percent of persons over fifteen stated that they performed home duties with most of these being women;
- ❑ Most of the employed people in Sligo worked in professional services (22%), manufacturing (19%), commerce (16%) or agriculture (15%);
- ❑ Of the total population whose full-time education had ceased **the highest level of education achieved for almost 30% was primary school education** whilst **17% had obtained their Junior Certificate** and **18% had obtained their Leaving Certificate**;
- ❑ **Nineteen percent of persons over 15 years** in Sligo **had ceased school when they were under 15 years old**; **two thirds of those had finished school by the time they were nineteen.**

Cork, County Borough

The following section will give an overview of statistics relating to the Shanakiel area of Cork from the 1996 Census.

Population:

- ❑ As of the 1996 Census 3,689 people resided in the Shanakiel area of Cork;
- ❑ This area had a **high proportion of 10-19 year olds with one quarter of the total population in this age range** compared to 19% on average throughout Ireland;
- ❑ There were **417 young people aged 10-14 years and 504 people aged 15-19** residing in Shanakiel;
- ❑ The proportion of males and females was almost exact.

Household types:

- ❑ There were approximately 885 households in this district of Cork;
- ❑ There was a higher proportion of couple households with children in Shanakiel. Fifty six percent of households in Shanakiel were couple with children households compared to 39% of households on average across Ireland;
- ❑ There was also a higher proportion of single parent households with **15% of households being single parent households⁵** compared to the national average of nine percent of households in Ireland;
- ❑ This district of Cork had a **notably lower proportion of one person households** and a higher proportion of family and lone parent family households;
- ❑ On average the number of people per household in Shanakiel was higher. There were almost four (3.85) people living in each household in this district of Cork, compared to the national average (3.1 persons);
- ❑ **Of all the family households in Cork almost 50% had one or two children. Twenty four percent of family households in Cork had three children. Seventeen percent of family households in Shanakiel had four or more children**, slightly higher than the national average of 13% of family unit households;
- ❑ In Cork there was a **higher proportion of younger family households** compared to the rest of Ireland **with 11% of all households eldest child being 0-4 years old** compared to 6% on average across Ireland;
- ❑ In 46% of family households in Shanakiel the oldest child was aged between 10-19 years.

Employment and education:

- ❑ **Thirty eight percent of the population over 15 years of age in Shanakiel were employed in 1996;**
- ❑ **A high 12% defined themselves as unemployed** and nine percent stated that they were unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability;
- ❑ Seventeen percent of persons over 15 years old were students and another 18% performed home duties;
- ❑ Most of employed people in this district of Cork worked in professional services (26%), manufacturing (24%) or commerce (22%);

⁵Includes: Mother and children, father with children, mother with children and others, father with children and others.

- ❑ Of the total population whose full-time education had ceased the **highest level of education achieved for 28% was primary school education** whilst another **28% had obtained their Junior Certificate and 18% had obtained their Leaving Certificate**;
- ❑ **Nineteen percent of persons over 15 years** in this district of Cork **ceased school when they were under 15 years old**; 19% of persons over fifteen finished school by the time they were nineteen.

Tralee, Co.Kerry

Kerry is situated in the south west of Ireland and Tralee is one of the major towns in the county. According to the 1996 census approximately 20,000 people lived in Tralee. The following section will give a brief overview of the demographics of the town according to 1996 Census figures.

Population:

- ❑ There were approximately **3,676 young people aged between 10-19 years** living in Tralee at the time of the 1996 Census representing 18% of the total population;
- ❑ The 10-19 year old population was evenly split between males and females.

Household types:

- ❑ There were approximately 6,400 households in Tralee;
- ❑ There was a slightly lower proportion of couple households with children in Tralee with 34% of households being couple households with children compared to the national average of 38% percent of households;
- ❑ **Eight percent of households were lone parent households with almost all being lone mother households in Tralee**;
- ❑ The same as the national average there were approximately three people living in each household in Kerry;
- ❑ The number of large family households was slightly lower compared to national averages with the majority (52%) of family households in Kerry comprising of had one or two children. Twenty three percent of households had no children, whilst **10% had four or more children** (slightly lower than the national average of 13% of family unit households);
- ❑ In this district of Kerry there was a higher proportion of younger family households compared to the rest of Ireland with 13% of all households eldest child being 0-4 years old compared to 6% (on average) across Ireland;
- ❑ In **38% of family households** (or 1,264) **the oldest child was aged between 10-19 years**.

Employment and education:

- ❑ **Forty three percent** of the population **over 15 years of age** in Kerry **were employed** in 1996;
- ❑ **Nine percent of people over 15 years defined themselves as unemployed** and 3% stated that they were unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability;
- ❑ **14% of persons over 15 years old were students** and another **19% performed home duties**;

- ❑ Most of employed people in this district of Cork worked in commerce (23%), professional services (22%) or manufacturing (18%);
- ❑ Of the total population whose full-time education had ceased the **highest level of education achieved for 23% was primary school education** whilst **20% had obtained their Junior Certificate and 20% had obtained their Leaving Certificate**;
- ❑ **Twelve percent of persons over 15 years** in this district of Kerry **ceased school when they were under 15 years old and 14% of all people over 15 years in Kerry were still at school.**

Navan

Population:

- ❑ According to the 1996 census, there were **approximately 2,383 young people aged between 10-19 years** living in Navan representing 19% of the total population;
- ❑ There were 1,233 10-14 year olds and 1,149 15-19 year olds in Navan.

Households types:

- ❑ There were almost 4,000 households in Navan in 1996 of which the majority were private households;
- ❑ A high proportion of households were couples with children (43% of households);
- ❑ **Nineteen percent of households were one person households** whilst 10% of all households in Navan were single parent households;
- ❑ Navan was almost **exactly the same as national averages in terms of the number of children living in family households**: one quarter of family households had one child whilst 37% had two children and 15% had three children;
- ❑ There was approximately 3 person per household on average in Navan in 1996.

Employment and education:

- ❑ **Twenty-eight percent** of the population in Navan over **fifteen years old had ceased their education at primary school level** whilst **22% had reached lower secondary school level (obtaining junior certificate)**;
- ❑ **Eleven percent** of the population **over 15 years** in Navan **were still at school** whilst **45% of the population finished school when they were 15-17 years old**. Thirteen percent ceased their education when they were eighteen years old. Nineteen percent had ceased their education when they were over 19 years old indicating that they may have been attending higher education;
- ❑ Two thirds of the population over fifteen worked in manufacturing (21%), commerce (21%) and professional services (20%);
- ❑ In 1996 just over 9% of the population was unemployed (having lost or given up their previous job) whilst approximately 3% of the population over fifteen years was unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability;
- ❑ Almost 20% of the working age population performed home duties with almost all of these being women.

Waterford:

Population:

- ❑ As of the 1996 Census 42,540 people resided in Waterford;
- ❑ **Eighteen percent** the total population in this county **were aged between 10-19 years, representing approximately 7,578 people;**
- ❑ There were 3,384 people aged 10- 14 years and 4,194 people aged 15- 19 years;
- ❑ The proportion of males and females was almost exact.

Household types:

- ❑ There were approximately 13,630 households in Waterford;
- ❑ The composition of households in Waterford was similar to national trends. The composition of households was mainly couples with children (38%) or couples without children (14%) and one person households (21%);
- ❑ **Eleven percent of households were single parent households⁶** (mother and children or father and children) which is again the same as the national average in Ireland;
- ❑ On average there were three people living in each household in Waterford;
- ❑ Of all the family households in Waterford 54% had one or two children whilst 22% had no children;
- ❑ **Waterford had a smaller proportion of households with four or more children (10%) than the national average (13%)** indicating smaller family sizes than in the other projects;
- ❑ In Waterford there was **a higher proportion of younger family households compared to the rest of Ireland with 11% of all family households eldest child being 0-4 years old compared to 6% on average across Ireland;**
- ❑ **In 39% of family households the oldest child was aged between 10-19 years old.**

Employment and education:

- ❑ Forty five percent of the population over 15 years of age were employed in 1996 in Waterford;
- ❑ **Nine percent of the working age population defined themselves as unemployed** and 3% stated that they were unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability;
- ❑ A high 13% of persons over 15 years old were students and another 20% performed home duties (almost all females);
- ❑ One third of employed persons over fifteen years old in Waterford worked in manufacturing industries whilst another 19% worked in commerce and another 19 in professional services;
- ❑ Of the total population whose full-time education had ceased **the highest level of education achieved for 27% was primary school education whilst 26% had obtained their Junior Certificate and 19% had obtained their Leaving Certificate;**

⁶Includes: Mother and children, father with children, mother with children and others, father with children and others.

- ❑ **Fifteen percent of persons over 15 years in Waterford ceased school when they were under 15 years old** whilst 13% of 15 year olds and over were still at school.

Dublin- Priorswood:

Population:

- ❑ As of the 1996 Census 3,790 people resided the Priorswood area of Dublin;
- ❑ **Almost 21% of the total population in this district was aged between 10- 19** which is slightly higher than national census figures where 19% of the population in Ireland were aged 10-19 years;
- ❑ There were 429 people aged 10-14 years and 349 people aged 15-19;
- ❑ There was a notably higher proportion of women in this area of Dublin than men with women representing 54% of the population.

Household types:

- ❑ There were approximately 915 households in this district of Dublin;
- ❑ Almost 50% of households in Priorswood were made up of couples with children, which is notably higher than the national average of 39%;
- ❑ A significantly high **34% of households were one parent households in this area of Dublin, with 32% of these being mother and children households. This is notably higher than the national average of 8%;**
- ❑ This district of Dublin has a notably lower proportion of one person households compare to the rest of Ireland with only 3% being one person households;
- ❑ **Households were larger in Priorswood.** On average there were just **over four (4.14) people per household in Priorswood**, which was high compared to the national average (3.1 people per household);
- ❑ Of all the family households in this part of Dublin 50% had one or two children whilst 22% of households had three children;
- ❑ **Over one fifth of households in Priorswood had four or more children**, which is notably higher than the national average of 13%;
- ❑ **The age of the oldest child in Priorswood was notably lower with an oldest child under ten years of age in 40% of family households** compared with 22% overall in Ireland;
- ❑ **Thirty five percent of family household's oldest children were aged between 10- 19 years.**

Employment and education:

- ❑ The employment structure of this part of Dublin was markedly different that the rest of Ireland.
- ❑ A low **29%** of the population in Priorswood **over 15 years of age was employed** in 1996;
- ❑ Whilst a very high **27% defined themselves as unemployed** and 2% stated that they were unable to work due to permanent sickness or disability;
- ❑ Only 8% of persons over 15 years old were students and a high 29% performed home duties;
- ❑ One quarter of employed persons in Priorswood were working in the manufacturing industry whilst 23% were working in commerce;

- ❑ A lower 10% were working in professional services however a high 25% were working in other services;
- ❑ Of the total population whose full-time education had ceased the **highest level of education achieved for 38% was primary school education** whilst **37% had reached lower secondary school (obtained their Junior Certificate)** and **7% had obtained their Leaving Certificate;**
- ❑ **Thirty percent of persons over 15 years** in this district of Dublin **ceased school when they were under 15 years old.**

Dublin- Merchants Quay:

The following section will give an overview of statistics relating to the demographics of Merchant Quay using data from the 1996 census.

Population:

- ❑ As of the 1996 Census 2,296 people resided the Merchant Quay are of Dublin;
- ❑ **Twelve percent** of the total population in this district was **aged between 10-19** which was notably lower than national averages;
- ❑ There were 125 people aged 10-14 years and 143 people aged 15-19 years;
- ❑ There was a higher proportion of women (55%) than men living in this area (45%).

Household types:

- ❑ There were approximately 879 households in this district in Dublin with a markedly different composition of private households compared to the rest of Ireland;
- ❑ Notably lower than national figures, only 17% of households in Merchants Quay were couple households with children (national average of 39% of all households are couple households with children);
- ❑ **One fifth of households were lone mother and children households which is over double the national average;**
- ❑ There was also a high proportion of lone person households with **37% of households in Merchants Quay being lone person houses;**
- ❑ Due to the high proportion of one person households the number of persons per household in Merchants Quay was lower than average (2.39 compared to 3.1 people per household);
- ❑ Of all the family households in Merchants Quay almost 60% had one or two children. Twelve percent of family households in this part of Dublin had three children;
- ❑ In this part of Dublin there was a **significantly higher proportion of younger family households** compared to the rest of Ireland **with 28% of all households eldest child being 0-4 years old** compared to 6% on average across Ireland;
- ❑ **Twenty seven percent of the family households in Merchants Quay had eldest children between the ages of 10-19 years** and this is lower than the national average.

Employment and education:

- ❑ **Thirty seven percent of the population over 15 years of age was employed in 1996;**
- ❑ A high 9% of all persons over 15 years old retired and another 17% performed home duties;
- ❑ Twenty five percent of people employed in this section of Dublin were employed in professional services with most of these being women;
- ❑ **Of the total population whose full-time education had ceased the highest level of education achieved for 31% of the population was primary school education whilst 22% has obtained there Junior Certificate and 14% had obtained their Leaving Cert.;**
- ❑ **One quarter of persons over 15 years in this Merchants Quay had ceased school under 15 years old.**

Dublin- Tallaght (Jobstown):

Population:

- ❑ As of the 1996 Census 7,294 people resided in the Tallaght/Jobstown area of Dublin;
- ❑ **A high 26% of the total population were aged between 10-19 years.** This proportion of young people is high compared to national figures where 26% of the population in Ireland is aged 10-24 years;
- ❑ There were 1,017 people aged 10-14 years and 873 people aged 15-19 years;
- ❑ The proportion of males and females was almost exact.

Household types:

- ❑ There were approximately 1,890 households in this district of Dublin;
- ❑ Notably higher than the national average, a high 44% of households were couple households with children which is (39% of all households in Ireland are couple with children households);
- ❑ **Twenty three percent of households were single parent households⁷** (mother and children or father and children) which is again notably higher than the national average of 9% of households in Ireland;
- ❑ Almost all single parent households were female headed households;
- ❑ This district of Dublin had a notably lower proportion of one person households;
- ❑ **On average there were almost 4 (3.86) people living in each private household in Tallaght-Jobstown, which was higher, compared to the national average (3.1). Notably temporary households in Tallaght-Jobstown had a high average of 5 people per household;**
- ❑ Of all the family households in Tallaght-Jobstown a low 14% had no children, 18% had one child and 45% had two or three children. **Twenty two percent of family households had four or more children** which is notably higher than the national average of 13% of family households with four or more children;
- ❑ In this part of Dublin there was a higher proportion of younger family households compared to the rest of Ireland with **14% of all households eldest child being 0-4 years old compared to 6% on average across Ireland;**

⁷Includes: Mother and children, father with children, mother with children and others, father with children and others.

- ❑ **The eldest children of almost half of the family households in this part of Dublin were aged between 10- 19 years.**

Employment and education:

- ❑ Thirty eight percent of the population over 15 years of age was employed in 1996;
- ❑ Whilst a high **17% defined themselves as unemployed with 22% of those unemployed aged 15-24 years;**
- ❑ Thirteen percent of persons over 15 years old were students and another 24% performed home duties- most of these were females;
- ❑ Most of employed people in this district of Dublin worked in professional services (21%), manufacturing (23%) or commerce (22%);
- ❑ Of the total population whose full-time education had ceased the **highest level of education achieved for 34% was primary school education** whilst another **34% had obtained their Junior Certificate and 13% had obtained their Leaving Certificate;**
- ❑ **Twenty six percent of persons over 15 years in this district of Dublin ceased school when they were under 15 years old and 13% of people over fifteen years old in Tallaght-Jobstown were still in school.**

Dun Laoghaire- Rathdown:

Population:

- ❑ As of the 1996 Census 880 people resided the Rathdown area of Dublin;
- ❑ **Seventeen percent** of the total population in this district was **aged between 10-19 years;**
- ❑ In 1996 the census indicates that there were just 64 people aged 10- 14 years and 88 people aged 15-19 years;
- ❑ The proportion of males and females was almost exact.

Household types:

- ❑ There were approximately 275 households in this local area of Dublin;
- ❑ A large proportion of households were couple households with children (44%) which is slightly higher than the national average (39% of all households in Ireland are couple with children households);
- ❑ **Six per cent of households were single parent households** ⁸ (mother and children or father and children) which is slightly lower than the national average of 9% of households in Ireland;
- ❑ On average there were three people living in each household in Rathdown;
- ❑ Of all the family households in this area of Dublin the almost 50% had one or two children. Sixteen percent of family households in Rathdown had three children and **9% had four or more children** which is slightly lower than the national average of 13% of family unit households;
- ❑ In Rathdown there were **a higher proportion of older families with 42% of family households eldest child being over 20 years old compared to 33% on average across Ireland.**

⁸Includes: Mother and children, father with children, mother with children and others, father with children and others.

Employment and education:

- ❑ A high 46% of the population over 15 years of age was employed in 1996;
- ❑ The unemployment rate in this area of Dublin was very low with **2% of the population describing themselves as unemployed** in 1996.
- ❑ There was a high proportion of retired people living in this area of Dublin in 1996 with 10% of the population over fifty years retired;
- ❑ A high 25% of persons over 15 years old performed home duties and another 16% were students;
- ❑ Most of employed people in this district of Dublin worked in commerce (33%) or professional services (24%);
- ❑ The people in this area of Dublin had higher education levels than the rest of the projects with **one quarter of people over fifteen ceasing their education when they received their Leaving Certificate** whilst another **41% completed higher education such as professional qualifications, degrees, sub-degree qualifications or post-graduate degrees**;
- ❑ **Fifteen percent of persons over 15 years** in this district of Dublin **ceased school when they were under 15 years old** whilst one third completed school after eighteen years old.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Young People

Project Code no:

Gender: Male ____/ Female ____

DOB: __/__/__

Country of Birth _____

About this Interview

The aim of these interviews will be to talk to 150 young people involved in similar projects across the country. The purpose of the information collected is to create a profile of young people involved in Garda Youth Diversion Projects in Ireland. The interview focuses very briefly on a number of areas including questions about the area where you live, your lifestyle, your education and attendance at school, your friends and family, attitudes to offending and your hopes for the future.

All information contained in this interview will be available only to the researchers. The information will be presented in a way that the identity of any individual young people can not be revealed.

Background Information

When did you become involved with the Project?

How did you become involved with this Project?

- Young persons perception of the referral process

In your own words, what do you think this Project is about?

The area where you live

How would you describe the area where you live?

What types of things are there for young people to do in your area?

Do you think that this project makes a difference for young people living in your area?

Yes/ No

Please explain

Lifestyle

On a typical day how do you spend your time?

- What sorts of things do you do?
- Who do you spend your time with?

Do you take part in any sports?

Yes/ No

- Do you take part in these sports within your local community?

If yes, please list these sports

Please list any other hobbies, activities and games (not sports) that you take part in

Do you take part in any clubs, groups, teams or organisations (apart from this project)? **Yes/ No**

If yes, for how long?

• Are they within the local community? **Yes/No**

Do you have any part-time jobs (such as baby sitting, paper rounds, etc) **Yes/ No**
If yes, what kind of job(s) do you do?

Education and attendance at school

Do you think that education is important? **Yes/No**
Please explain

Are you attending school? **Yes/ No**

(If not attending school skip to shaded area)

If you are attending school, do you like school? **Yes/No**
Please explain

How long do you think you will continue to stay in school?
- Completion of state exams?

What do you intend to do when you finish school?

Seek employment	_____
Third level education	_____
FAS training	_____
Youthreach	_____
Other	_____
Don't know	_____

Would you often miss days from school?

Not very often	_____
At least once every two weeks	_____
At least once a week	_____
Very often	_____

What are the main reasons why you would miss school?

(a) **If you are not attending school**, what were the reasons for you leaving?

(b) Did you do any exams (Junior Cert.) before you finished school? **Yes/No**

(c) Do you have any plans to return to school? **Yes/ No**
Give details (where appropriate)

What have you been doing since you stopped attending school?

- Have you been involved in a Community Training Workshop/FAS, working, and so on?

Friends and family

Who are you currently living with?

- How long have you been living with these arrangements?

- Are parents married, living together, separated, divorced, deceased?

How many brothers and sisters do you have?

- Include step/foster brothers and sisters

Are you happy with your current living arrangements?

Yes/No

Please explain

How many close friends would you say you have?

___ **None** ___ **1** ___ **2 or 3** ___ **4 or more**

Do your close friends live locally

Yes/No

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 is very good and 5 is very bad) how well do you get on with the following:

Reply to each where appropriate	1 Very good	2 Good	3 Okay	4 Bad	5 Very bad
Brothers					
Sisters					
Your teachers in school					
Mother					
Father					
Grandparents					
Project co-ordinator/staff					
Any others? Please specify					

At the moment who is the most important person in your life?

Attitudes to offending

Have you ever been in trouble with the Gardai

Yes/ No

If yes, what did you do?

From the table below, please say if you were involved in any of the following (1= never, 4= very often)

	Never	Once or twice	A few times	Very often
Skipped school	1	2	3	4
Was suspended from school	1	2	3	4
Was expelled from school	1	2	3	4
Drank alcohol	1	2	3	4
Took drugs, e.g. cannabis	1	2	3	4
Stolen anything from a shop or supermarket, etc.	1	2	3	4
Written or sprayed graffiti on walls, buses, train seats, bus shelters, etc.	1	2	3	4
Hurt someone with some type of weapon, e.g. knife, stick, etc.	1	2	3	4
Run away from home	1	2	3	4
Joyriding	1	2	3	4
Any others?	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4
	1	2	3	4

Have any of your friends ever been in trouble with the Gardai?

Yes/ No

- How many? Were these close friends?

Has any body close to you ever been in trouble with the Gardai

Yes/No

Hopes for the future

What are your hopes for the future?

Do you think you will live near your family/in the same community when you get older?

Yes/No

Please explain

Any other comments

Are there any comments that you would like to make that you feel have not been included in this interview?

Many thanks for taking part in this interview

APPENDIX D

Focus Group with Young People

General Views on the Project

Can you tell me what you think this project is about?

Do you like the project, and why?

Is there anything that you don't like? Why?

Do you think the project makes a difference to young people living here, and why?

If you didn't come to this project, what kinds of things would you do instead?

From the following list, please say whether or not you think this project provides you with:

For each of the factors listed below focus briefly on what way these are provided

Support

Friendship

Lots of things to do

Just somewhere to go once or twice a week

Helps us to stay out of trouble

Teaches us things about drugs, etc.

Is there anything else that the project provides you with that I haven't mentioned?

Which of the above do you think are the most important?

Staying Out of Trouble

Can you give any reasons why you think young people get into trouble around your area?

What do you think are the best ways of trying to stop young people from getting into trouble?

Do you think that school is important in any way in helping young people to stay out of trouble? Why?

Do you think that family is important in helping you to stay out of trouble, and why?

What about friends? Would they help you to stay out of trouble?

Do any Gardai get involved with the project?

Yes/ No

Do you think that having the Gardai involved with the project is a good or a bad thing?

Why?

Recommendations and Suggestions for the Future

How long do you think you will stay involved with this project?

Include main reasons for staying involved

If we think about the future of this project, can you come up with five suggestions that would make it better?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Any Other Comments

Are there any other comments you would like to make about your project that have not been included in this interview?

Many thanks for taking part in this interview

APPENDIX E

CODE: _____

Study of Participants in Garda Special Projects QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PROJECT CO-ORDINATORS

THE AIM OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

The Centre for Social and Educational Research at the Dublin Institute of Technology have been commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to conduct a research study on participants of Garda Special Projects. The objective of this study is to provide an in-depth examination of *risk factors*, which could be considered as having contributed to the offending behaviour of young people who are currently participating in the projects.

We are currently at the final stages of the study. To date we have conducted interviews with a sample of young people from projects nation wide. However, we also feel that it would be important to gain your views as Project Co-ordinator working within the community on the identification and targeting of risk factors.

Background Information

How many young people in total are currently involved with the project?

How many different groups are there?

Please give details (age groups and aim) on the groups that are run?

How many males/females do you currently cater for?

Males _____

Females _____

From the table below please indicate how many of your young people have been referred from the following sources:

Referral source	Number of males	Number of females
Juvenile Liaison Officer		
Other Gardaí		
Probation Officer		
Social worker		
Family Support services		
Parents		
Youth work staff (from other projects or youth service)		
School		
Self		
Other (please specify)		

The Community

Are there any particular social issues/problems prevalent in the community?

What types of facilities for young people are provided within the community?

In your own words, what are the main aims of the project?

In your opinion, how does the project contribute to the community?

What are the needs of the particular young people that you work with?

What are the needs of the families of the young people that you work with?

In your opinion, how do family situations affect young people (attending Garda Special Projects)?

The availability of other services

What youth services are being provided in the area serviced by your project?

In your opinion, do you feel that there is a need for other (additional) youth services to be provided within your area? **Yes** ____ / **No** ____

Please explain

Please outline the **nature** and the **extent** of Garda involvement in the project

Identifying risk factors

What ‘risk factors’ would you identify with regard to contributing to the offending behaviour of the young people that you currently work with?

Do you think there are different risk factors relevant for boys and girls?

What aspect of your work do you feel specifically addresses risk factors?

With regard to your work with the young people, can you identify any obstacles with regard to trying to address these risk factors?

What recommendations would you make with regard to effectively **identifying** the main risk factors in the young people’s lives?

What recommendations would you make with regard to effectively **tackling** the main risk factors in young people’s lives?

Any other comments

Are there any other comments that you would like to make that you feel have not been included in this questionnaire?

APPENDIX F

CODE: _____

Study of Participants in Garda Youth Diversion Projects QUESTIONNAIRE – GARDA

THE AIM OF THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

The Centre for Social and Educational Research at the Dublin Institute of Technology have been commissioned by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to conduct a research study on participants of Garda Special Projects. The objective of this study is to provide an in-depth examination of *risk factors*, which could be considered as having contributed to the offending behaviour of young people who are currently participating in the projects.

We are currently at the final stages of the study. To date we have conducted interviews with a sample of young people from projects nation wide. However, we also feel that it would be important to gain your views as a Garda working within the community on the identification and targeting of risk factors.

The Community

How would you describe the area in which the Garda Special Project is located?

Are there any particular social problems that you would identify with regard to the area where the project is located?

How would you describe the needs (social, emotional, psychological, educational etc.) of the particular young people that are involved with the Project?

How would you describe the needs of the families of the young people who are catered for by the Garda Special Projects?

What are the aims of the Garda Special Project in relation to the group of young people currently involved?

Can you identify any particular problems faced by the Garda Special Projects with regard to achieving their aims?

Please outline the **extent** and **nature** of Garda involvement in the project?

Are there any particular issues that you can identify with regard to Garda involvement with the project?

Identifying risk factors

What 'risk factors' would you identify with regard to contributing to the offending behaviour of the young people currently involved with the Garda Special Project?

With regard to your work with the young people, can you identify any obstacles in relation to trying to address these risk factors?

What recommendations would you make with regard to effectively **identifying** the main risk factors in the young people's lives?

What recommendations would you make with regard to effectively **tackling** the main risk factors in the young people's lives?

Any other comments

Are there any other comments that you would like to make that you feel have not been included in this questionnaire?

Many thanks for completing this questionnaire

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