



# Summer Riots

Summary of existing literature and key observations

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## Contents

About the National Youth Agency .....	2
Introduction .....	3
Where and when did they take place? .....	3
How many people were involved? .....	3
Who was involved? .....	3
Socio-demographics and specific observations re. young people .....	3
What crimes were committed and what were the consequences?.....	4
What were the causes?.....	4
What recommendations were made? .....	5
What has been done so far? .....	7
Examples of youth initiatives and actions .....	7
Appendix A: List of key reports into the 2011 Summer Riots .....	9

## **About the National Youth Agency**

The National Youth Agency (NYA) is the national expert and development organisation in youth policy and youth work, supporting those who work with young people in England with a particular focus on local government and their partners.

Our focus is youth work and we believe strongly that by investing in young people's personal and social development they are better able to live more active and fulfilling lives. We support those involved in the planning, commissioning and delivery of young people's personal and social development and whose work is concerned with enabling all young people to fulfil their potential as individuals and citizens.

We work in partnership with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations in seeking to secure better policies and outcomes for young people. We work with, and through, the sector to create an influential set of products which help organisations and practitioners to deliver more effectively to young people and improve the quality of practice. We are also involved in developing tools to support the demonstration of the impact of youth work approaches on outcomes for young people and in securing new resources for the sector through private sector engagement.

## Introduction

The summer riots of 2011 have been the subject of many published literature, ranging from official reports and statistics to independent research and news articles. This document aims to summarise the key observations and answer some key questions, with a particular focus on young people. We have also included some references to examples of youth initiatives and actions that have taken place following the riots. A list of key reports into the 2011 summer riots is provided in Appendix A.

## Where and when did they take place?

The summer riots started on 6<sup>th</sup> August in Tottenham. Over five days the disturbances spread to other areas within London and outside the capital, including Manchester, Bristol, Liverpool, Birmingham and Nottingham. The Home Office estimated that up to 66 local authority areas were affected by rioting. Areas that had the highest number of recorded crimes were Croydon, Manchester, Birmingham, Southwark and Haringey.

## How many people were involved?

Whilst an estimated 15,000 people were involved in the riots, not all committed criminal acts. As at 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012, a total of 2,710 cases had been brought before the courts for offences relating to the public disorder between 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> August 2011.

## Who was involved?

Latest available figures<sup>1</sup> indicate that the majority of those brought before the courts for riot related offences were men and had had a previous conviction (on average, 11 previous offences). At least 84 people had committed 50 or more previous offences each and three-quarters of these people were aged 24 or younger.

The details by area show differing age profiles for those appearing before the courts in London, West Midlands and Greater Manchester, with fewer juveniles (aged 10-17) than in other areas. Areas with comparatively higher rates of juvenile cases included Nottingham (39%) and Merseyside (38%).

## Socio-demographics and specific observations re. young people

According to the most recent data (February 2012)<sup>1</sup>, over half of the 2,710 cases brought before the courts represent people aged 10-20; 27 per cent were aged 10-17 and a further 26 per cent were aged 18-20. Six per cent of those appearing before the courts for the disorder were over 40 years old.

Further socio-economic data regarding young people is available from Ministry of Justice figures for those brought before the courts as at October 2011<sup>2</sup>:

- 66% (253) of those in the 10-17 age group were aged 15-16.
- Those aged 10-17 much more likely to be from poor homes, have poor educational records and have been in trouble with the police.
- 46% (151) of this group live in the 10% lowest income areas. They were two and a half times more likely than other pupils to be receiving free school meals (142, or 42%).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/criminal-justice/public-disorder-august-11>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/criminal-justice/public-disorder-august-11/public-disorder-august-11-editions>

- 66% (220) had special educational needs – a figure which is three times higher than for the population as a whole
- On average, rioters in this age group missed almost one day of school a week, and 30% (115) were persistent absentees – a rate which is more than four times higher than the population of school children in year 11.
- 36% (139) had at least one fixed period exclusion from school during 2009/10 – six times higher than the national average.
- One in 10 achieved five or more A\*–C GCSEs including English and Maths, compared with one in two amongst all pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 in 2009/10.
- 62% (296) have at least one previous offence, with the majority having between 1 and 5 offences.

## **What crimes were committed and what were the consequences?<sup>3</sup>**

The top three cases brought before the courts as at 1<sup>st</sup> February 2012 were for burglary (49%), violent disorder (21%) and theft (16%).

The types of crime committed vary but the main ones were violence against individuals (particularly the police), arson, criminal damage and theft - 50% of crimes were acquisitive in nature. The final report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel highlighted that the riots were particularly characterised by opportunistic looting and very much targeted at brands.

There are also regional differences in the types of cases. Whilst the majority within England and Wales were for burglary, in Nottingham and Merseyside over 70% of cases were for violent disorder. This same pattern is seen when looking specifically at cases amongst young people aged between 10-17 years.

Over half (55%) of the 2710 persons were found guilty and sentenced for their part in the violent disorder. 33% of these cases were aged 10-17 and further 23% were aged 18-20. The majority of all cases have been sentenced to immediate custody with an average custodial sentence length of 14.2 months. For those aged 10-17, 60% were given a community sentence and 36% were sentenced to immediate custody. Juveniles sentenced to immediate custody for burglary have an average custodial sentence length of 7.8 months and for adults it was 5.3 months – this includes two offenders given two consecutive six month sentences.

Five people died during the riots. In addition to the loss of five lives, the impact on communities included lost homes, businesses and an overriding sense of despair that people could destroy their own communities. The wider consequences include damage claims, lost sales, clean-up costs and the negative impact on tourism. The final bill has been estimated to be around half a billion pounds (plus impacts on tourism).

## **What were the causes?**

Various pieces of research into the causes and motivations for the riots have been published, highlighting that there was no single cause and no single solution.

The Riot, Communities and Victims Panel<sup>4</sup> (set up by the government and chaired by Darra Singh OBE) noted that motivations ranged from the immediate gratification of a free pair of

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.justice.gov.uk/statistics/criminal-justice/public-disorder-august-11>

<sup>4</sup> <http://riotspanel.independent.gov.uk/>

trainers to a desire to attack society. Concern was also expressed over the initial response to the disturbances and some felt that tensions had been rising in Tottenham for some time.

Underlying issues believed to have ultimately led to the riots are also highlighted in published literature. Those particularly relevant to young people are:

- Lack of opportunities for young people
- Sense of hopelessness – many young people felt that goals many take for granted such as getting a job or going to university were unachievable
- Failure of family values and perceptions about poor parenting
- Desire to own goods which give the owner high status, concerns about materialism
- Confidence in policing

The Natcen study<sup>5</sup> highlights motivations related to benefits (something exciting to do, the opportunity to get free stuff and a chance to get back at police). It also noted factors that had facilitated involvement including situational (e.g. locality), personal (e.g. criminal history, aspirations), family and community, societal (e.g. poverty, youth provision).

The Guardian/LSE report<sup>6</sup> concluded that anger with the police fuelled the summer's unrest

Following a survey of children's and adults' views, The Children's Society<sup>7</sup> gave a mixed picture of causes overall, with most choosing more than one reason why the riots happened. Most adults and children agreed on four key reasons why some young people became involved in the riots:

- To get goods and possessions they couldn't afford to buy
- Just for fun
- Pressure to join in from others taking part
- Boredom

Whilst the riots were not identified as race riots one key finding from the research published by the Runnymede Trust<sup>8</sup> is that strained relationships between the police and the BME community were a significant factor in the outbreak of the riots.

## **What recommendations were made?**

Many recommendations have been put forward by the Riots Communities and Victims Panel and in many other published reports.

Recommendations made included those related to restorative justice, police complaints procedures, media and compensation.

The final report<sup>9</sup> of the Panel makes 63 recommendations falling under six key themes. Recommendations particularly relevant to the youth services sector are highlighted in the following table:

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/study/the-august-riots-in-england->

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/series/reading-the-riots>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/news-views/riots>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/publications/174/32.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://riotspanel.independent.gov.uk/>

Theme	Selected recommendations
Children and parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local public services should work with partners to identify all families with multiple issues and coordinate relevant interventions</li> <li>- All local authorities should immediately produce fully transparent family intervention commissioning statements supported by a robust evidence base.</li> </ul>
Building personal resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councils review youth service provision with the aim of maximising its impact on strengthening the character of young people in the most deprived areas</li> <li>- Local authorities make a public commitment to driving up the numbers of volunteers in their local areas</li> <li>- Work with local authorities and local services to maximise availability of buildings, facilities and equipment to youth groups and services</li> <li>- Local authorities to ensure that young people have access to youth groups and services at weekends and over the school holiday.</li> </ul>
Hopes and dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local authorities to flag those identified as at risk of becoming NEET on their current young people's database to enable local providers to take action.</li> <li>- Businesses to become part of the solution acting as Business Ambassadors for local schools, working with schools, the public and the voluntary sector.</li> </ul>
Riots and the brands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brands to use marketing expertise, working together to launch a campaign promoting positive perceptions of young people</li> </ul>
The usual suspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Probation, Prisons and voluntary and community sector partners to work together with the aim of ensuring every young adult is offered a mentor to support them on completion of their prison sentence.</li> </ul>
Police and the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Police services review mechanisms for engaging with the community, being relevant and representative, in particular including young people.</li> </ul>

The NCVO report<sup>10</sup> offers a number of recommendations and calls on the government to make a full assessment of the impact of spending cuts on communities, voicing concerns over the lack of funding for young people's services beyond 13-19

The Home Affairs Select Committee report<sup>11</sup> made recommendations primarily related to tactical policing issues.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sites/default/files/AftertheRiotsfinalPDF.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/home-affairs-committee/news/plsd-report-publication/>

## What has been done so far?

In response to the riots, various initiatives and actions have either been announced or are already in place. A selection of key programmes and case studies are summarised below:

- [Troubled Families Programme](#)
- [Family Nurse Partnership](#)
- [Croydon Community Mothers Programme](#)
- [The Mayor of London's 'YOU Matter' scheme to address the needs for volunteers](#)
- [Chance UK mentoring program](#)
- [Community Service Volunteers \(CSV\)](#)
- [Haringey Jobs Fund](#)
- [The coalition's £1 billion Youth Contract](#)
- [Intermediate Labour programmes \(ILM\)](#)
- [£270 million Growing Places Fund](#)
- [Work Programme](#)
- [Nike and vInspired Gamechangers with Active Communities Network](#)
- [The Business Connector Programme \(Business in the Community\)](#)
- [Plans to extend the use of community payback](#)
- [Plans by the Prince's Trust to double its support for young people across five of the areas hardest hit by the England riots](#)
- [A report by the Chartered Institute of Housing outlines how housing providers are tackling issues and building stronger communities](#)

### Examples of youth initiatives and actions

#### [Harrow: Youth workers to join police](#)

Following riots throughout London youth workers joined police patrols for the remainder of the summer holidays to bolster community relations and talk to young people with the aim of defusing and preventing any problems escalating. Harrow Borough Council committed to provide a minimum of four youth workers every evening for the rest of August to support police foot patrols.

#### [Money Power Respect \(Global Education Derby\)](#)

Money Power Respect was set up in the wake of last summer's riots. The Derbyshire project, backed by European funding, works with young people who have been excluded from school, dropped out, been involved in gangs or attended pupil referral units. The workshops organised look at issues of politics and power, equality, prejudice, racism and sexism. The scheme has been nominated for the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services' Young Partners Award.

### [Hackney Training Scheme](#)

With the backing of the local authority, the BBC and the arts organisation Bafta have converted the Hackney Picturehouse cinema into the Hackney Academy to offer training to up to 10,000 young people, focusing on the music, film and fashion sectors.

### [CitySafe Havens Community Scheme](#)

Businesses will be given the chance to become an unofficial shelter for young people if they encounter problems on the streets. The havens were one of the recommendations found after the Citizens' Inquiry into the London riots, led by the campaign group North London Citizens.

### [More dialogue with young people in Southwark](#)

Following an informative and successful meeting with young people from across the borough immediately after the riots, the cabinet at Southwark Council has decided to hold six-monthly meetings with young people, recognising the importance of ongoing dialogue and engagement to inform council policies and services.

### [London Brigade Local Intervention Fire Education \(LIFE\)](#)

The Tottenham LIFE scheme was set up in direct response to the Riots Communities and Victims Panel report. A group of 18-25 year olds took part in the Brigade's Local Intervention Fire Education (LIFE) course at Tottenham Fire Station, whose crews attended several fires during the riots. The scheme aims to improve discipline, confidence and team building skills.

## Appendix A: List of key reports into the 2011 Summer Riots

- [Interim Report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel](#)
- [After the riots: The final report of the Riots Communities and Victims Panel](#)
- [Natcen: The August riots in England: Understanding the involvement of young people](#)
- [Home Affairs Select Committee report](#)
- [Home Office response to Home Affairs Select Committee Report](#)
- [Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies report](#)
- [The Guardian and London School of Economics: Reading the riots report](#)
- [The Children's Society: Behind the riots: Findings of a survey into children's and adults' views of the 2011 English riots](#)
- [Chartered Institute of Housing: The Riot Report](#)
- [Runnymede Trust: Race and the Riots of August 2011](#)
- [NCVO: After the riots: Evidence from the Voluntary and Community Sector on the causes of the 2011 riots and next steps for policy and practice](#)
- [Channel4 Special Report](#)
- [4 Days in August: Metropolitan Police Service Strategic review into the Disorder of August 2011, Final Report March 2012.](#)
- [Ministry of Justice Statistics](#)