

## Research Briefing N° 43

# Targeted youth support: Rapid Evidence Assessment of effective early interventions for youth at risk of future poor outcomes

The report examines the impact of the Targeted Youth Support (TYS) initiative on outcomes for young people.

**Key words:** young people; at risk; Targeted Youth Support

The research was carried out by the **Institute of Education's Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI Centre)** in 2008.



## Key findings

- We identified 29 risk and protective factors. The risk factors fell into five main areas: family, school, community, individuals and peers. We found 57 systematic reviews about what works and related these to the risk and protective factors.
- We found that rarely, if ever, were all known risk factors addressed by the included reviews; for example, one out of four known individual risk factors for mental health was addressed by the interventions we identified. Protective factors, where known, were all addressed in the reviews. The risk factors relating to drug and alcohol misuse, NEET (young people not in education, employment or training), and low attainment were rarely addressed in the reviews.
- More risk factors at the individual and family levels were identified (and more addressed) than at the school and community levels. This either suggests that individual and family levels are more important in determining behaviour or is simply a reflection of an emphasis in research and policy on personal responsibility and behaviour change.
- Many studies were not always clear that they were targeting a specific risk factor at all; they were aiming to improve a particular outcome.

We found a reasonable quantity of evidence on multi-component interventions, which are particularly relevant to TYS, but less detail on the specific sub-groups that might be affected by them. This information (where available) is included in detail in the report.

## What we did

Targeted Youth Support (TYS) is an initiative aimed at vulnerable young people and involves ensuring that agencies work together to meet young people's needs. The initiative's rationale is that a collaborative, 'joined-up' approach is needed because young people may have complex and multiple needs which cannot be met by mainstream or specialist services in isolation. This report was commissioned by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) to explore what works for young people in relation to the outcomes prioritised by the TYS initiative.

## How we did it

We were interested both in identifying which risks are associated with the outcomes targeted by TYS, and in interventions which improve these outcomes, and so conducted this study in two parts: Component 1) identification and assessment of risk and protective factors associated with TYS outcomes, and Component 2) a rapid review of systematic reviews examining what services and interventions work to reduce the poor outcomes.

## Further information

For the full report see ['Targeted youth support: Rapid Evidence Assessment of effective early interventions for youth at risk of future poor outcomes'](#)

### Contact

**Principal Investigator:** Professor James Thomas, Department of Childhood Families and Health, Institute of Education, University of London

**Email:** [j.thomas@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:j.thomas@ioe.ac.uk)

**Phone:** +44 (0)20 7612 6844

**Other team members:** Dr Mark Newman (Co-Principal Investigator) and Kelly Dickson (Institute of Education); Carol-Ann Vigurs, Kathryn Oliver, Bettina Suarez, Jennifer Sinclair

IOE researchers are based at the IOE's Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (EPPI-Centre)