

*predictive of criminal involvement. A research programme based on urine testing of people arrested by the police, for example, found that nearly one in three had recently used opiates and in a survey of young male offenders, 20% used heroin, crack or cocaine. The Government's response has been to insert drug-related interventions at every stage from arrest to post-sentence supervision, including a new community-based sentence, the Drug Treatment and Testing Order (DTTO), for 16 and 17 year olds. As the title implies, this new Order allows the Court to impose drug testing and treatment on serious drug-related offenders, providing the offender consents.*

*Most of the Government's policy reforms have been developed on the basis of research evidence and tested through a careful process of piloting. The pilots began in 10 areas in 1998 but the findings of the evaluations will not be available until early next year. Some of the new orders have not been used at all and some only sparingly, but those based on well accepted or understood principles, such as final warnings and reparation orders, have been used consistently. Much of the resistance to the more radical new orders, such as the Child Safety Order and Parenting Order, comes from social workers who perceive them as **over-punitive and as potentially criminalising relatively minor forms of anti-social behaviour**. So whilst some of the new reforms are indeed highly innovative and potentially promising, there is also the fear that some of the measures may lead to a widening of the net and an increase in the prison population. This takes me to the fourth key area – the tightening of social control.*

#### **4. The tightening of social control**

*Since the introduction of the full range of new orders and measures since June of this year, a lot more now happens when a child gets into trouble than before. Juvenile offenders are no longer diverted from formal interventions but diverted to them. The scepticism which followed the 'nothing works' era has been replaced by*

*a new belief in interventions which work, if only with some young offenders some of the time. Much of this belief is based on better targeting and more rigorous use of research that tests what works, under what circumstances and with whom. Interventions have therefore become more focused, more evidence-based and, influenced by the need to be cost-effective, more targeted on those who do the most damage.*

*This tightening of formal social control is exemplified by the introduction of new measures that target repeat offenders, the most recent example of which is the extension of electronically tagged curfews to 10 – 15 year olds. To be introduced next year, this programme will target some 2,500 repeat offenders who might otherwise receive custodial sentences. Curfews will be mostly at night and during the day offenders will be required to undertake various education, training and offender-based courses. It remains to be seen whether in practice these new curfews will be used instead of or in addition to custodial sentences.*

*The ultimate expression of formal social control is incarceration. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 introduced the new Detention and Training Order (DTO), half of which is served in detention and half in the community under supervision. Available for 15 – 17 year olds (and 12 to 14 year old persistent offenders), a DTO must be made for a specific number of months (no less than 4 and no more than 24), with provision for early or late release depending on behaviour and progress whilst in detention. The principle of a seamless transition from custody to community underpins the new order. However, there is some concern that this may make the option more attractive to sentencers and lead to an increase in the prison population, which is precisely what early figures are suggesting. Given that average sentence lengths have doubled in the last decade, that the numbers of 15 – 17 year olds sentenced to custody has increased by 80% since 1992, and that there are*