

Evidence given by Bernadette Monaghan and Patricia Bowerbank at the Justice 2 Committee 6th January 2004.

ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ETC (SCOTLAND) BILL: STAGE 1

The Convener: It is now my pleasant task to welcome to the meeting representatives of Apex Scotland. Bernadette Monaghan is the director and Patricia Bowerbank is the service manager. Thank you very much for making yourselves available. We have had the benefit of your submission and committee members now want to explore a number of areas with you.

Jackie Baillie: I want to ask about community reparation orders and to find out how successful you feel that supervised attendance orders have been.

Bernadette Monaghan (Apex Scotland): In our experience, supervised attendance orders have been very successful. One reason for that is that supervised attendance is a constructive penalty. I was struck by what the witnesses from SACRO said about community reparation. When something is purely a punishment, with the purpose of making an example of young people, it can be counterproductive and lead to entrenched attitudes and hostility. In our experience, sheriffs are keen to use supervised attendance orders. They will probably be more in favour of them once they become a first sentencing option, which will happen in two pilot areas. As members can see from our written submission, our results have been pretty good—not only in the number of people who complete supervised attendance orders, but in the number who subsequently move on to positive outcomes.

Jackie Baillie: Supervision orders are, in effect, for fine defaulters, and community service orders are at the other end of the spectrum. Is there a place for community reparation orders?

Bernadette Monaghan: To be honest, I am not sure. One of my major concerns is that the distinction between supervised attendance, community reparation and community service becomes blurred in practice. People are moving further along the tariff and further into the system for what could have been relatively minor behaviour. We have to be clear about the criteria and we have to ask where community reparation sits and whether it is used only for people who fit those criteria and not for people for whom supervised attendance might be more appropriate.

Jackie Baillie: A number of people have suggested that the community reparation orders that will be available for 12 to 21-year-olds should be put in place for eight-year-olds and that there should be no upper age limit. What is your view?

Bernadette Monaghan: I am not sure about the use of community reparation orders for under-16s. The hearings system already has many powers

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and I would like more emphasis to be put on the education and needs of under-16s, rather than on purely punitive responses.

I am also not sure about the upper age limit. The average age of the people we work with on supervised attendance orders is around 26, but we have worked with 16-year-olds and 57-year-olds. Age has nothing to do with the benefit to the person of being on the order or with the work that can be done to help to turn their life around.

Jackie Baillie: Should community reparation orders be a matter for the courts or the children's hearings system?

Bernadette Monaghan: I would say that they should be a matter for the courts. I would caution against bringing measures that are geared towards adults—by which I mean over-16s—into the children's hearings system. Most young people do not come to the attention of the formal systems; the ones who do represent just 1.5 per cent of young people. They tend to offend once and then not come back into the system again. Only a very small proportion of children go on to offend in any sort of persistent way and they have a whole raft of issues and needs that set them apart from young people who engage in minor offending and minor behaviours.

The children's hearings system is very good at taking an holistic approach. Such an approach is just as relevant to over-16s, but I would not want the children's hearings system to become more of a punitive forum. We have to acknowledge that the children who come into the system on care and protection grounds are likely to be the same people who come back when they are older because of offending.

Jackie Baillie: In your submission, you say that you would be happy to engage formally with the Executive on the nature of reparation work. Has the Executive been in touch?

Bernadette Monaghan: No—but that is not to say that it will not be in touch. People respond to supervised attendance

because it is constructive; they can work on their issues and needs and can get something from the order. Because of our experience of that, I feel that we could have something to offer in shaping the form that community reparation orders might take.

Jackie Baillie: The emphasis of the Executive's reparation orders is on the work and restorative justice element rather than on education and training. Has the Executive got the balance right? Further, should compulsion be of concern?

Bernadette Monaghan: I believe that people are more willing to engage in anything if they can do it voluntarily first. Compulsion can be counterproductive. I want more emphasis on

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considering needs and issues, and on education and training. Rather than address offending behaviour by doing offending behaviour work, our role is to add value to continuing work by considering a young person's wider needs and issues so that they can sustain any positive benefits that they may get from offending behaviour work.

Unless we have those two components in any intervention, there are only limited chances of someone sustaining in the longer term what they may have learned, or sustaining the benefits of something, or learning something from a punitive response. I want to bring in my colleague Patricia Bowerbank at this point, because she has nine years' experience as a youth worker and is probably better qualified than I am to comment on how young people might respond, and on whether a purely punitive community reparation order would be as effective as people hope.

Patricia Bowerbank (Apex Scotland): I find that strong persuasion and encouragement pays off with young people far better than telling them what to do. If an idea is planted in a young person's mind, they take it forward as their own. We get far more positive results that way and there is more likelihood of our sustaining something.

Jackie Baillie: Does that kind of positive enforcement have 100 per cent success for the minority of young people who are responsible for persistent antisocial behaviour?

Patricia Bowerbank: In my experience, it does. Strong support and encouragement leads people through the process successfully.

Mike Pringle: I want to pick up on Jackie Baillie's point about the minority. Somebody told me that in Lothian, for example, there are fewer than 30 persistent young offenders. Do you believe that the approach that you just outlined would address that small minority? Do you not feel that you must take a stronger line?

Patricia Bowerbank: If we took a stronger line, we could, for example, introduce supervision to ensure that there was continuing support. The key is consistency and, in my opinion, strong relationships built on equality and respect. I do not have contact with the 30 people to whom Mike Pringle referred—well, perhaps I do. However, I would be inclined to try the way that I outlined before I dismissed it.

Mike Pringle: One of the bill's major proposals is to extend ASBOs to under-16s. The bill suggests 12 as the lower age limit. Do you have a view on that? Some people have suggested that, as the age of criminal responsibility is eight, the lower age limit for ASBOs should be eight. I believe that the Communities Committee first

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suggested that. Should we extend ASBOs to under-16s? Was the proposed lower age limit of 12 just plucked out of the air?

Bernadette Monaghan: I do not believe that we should extend ASBOs to under-16s because the children's hearings system adopts an holistic approach for under-16s. It would not be productive to go down the road of having ASBOs for under-16s because the hearings system already has powers to impose many conditions on supervision requirements while, it is hoped, ensuring that a young person's needs are addressed.

One of the problems at the moment is that much of the spend on criminal justice and youth justice is on processing young people. If one introduces a raft of new measures, including antisocial behaviour orders, there will be process costs. The spend—and the emphasis—needs to shift towards the fact that it does not matter what decision one makes in a hearing; the important measure, which must be strengthened, is the quality of the intervention that a young person and their family receive thereafter. We already have provision in the existing system for supervision requirements to address many of the issues that we hope to address. We do not, however, currently have the range of services in the community to build on that.

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The Convener: Is that a matter of resource?

Bernadette Monaghan: It is not only a matter of resource. We cannot sit here and say, "Let's have more money so we can do more of the same." We have to be more imaginative in what we are doing. There needs to be more clarity about the role of youth justice teams, for example. Is it simply to co-ordinate better the use of resources for a more persistent, hardcore group of offenders? Or is it to take a much wider, more holistic approach to the needs of young people in a particular community? The Executive is to be commended for the steps that it has taken to address all levels of offending by young people—some £33 million will be spent on youth justice by next year. It is not a case of saying, "Let's have more resources". It is a case of saying, "What are we missing at the moment? Are there ways in which agencies could work together more imaginatively?"

The Convener: Do you refer to things such as community mediation, as the earlier witnesses mentioned?

Bernadette Monaghan: All those things have their place and they are important. Youth justice teams have a crucial role in case-managing a young person because somebody has to ensure that a young person is plugged into the right service at the right time. It is not enough to have

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lots of resources in the community; we must ensure that young people can access them. For example, are they available at weekends? Patricia Bowerbank's work is largely at weekends and on Friday nights, when it is needed, and not Monday to Friday.

We have to consider case management and access to those services, co-ordination and ensuring that it happens at a community level. That is far more important than having a raft of new measures that require resources to implement and process. Those demands are bound to take resources away from services that are needed on the ground.

Patrick Harvie (Glasgow) (Green): I point out that, although the suggestion about antisocial behaviour orders for 8-year-olds might have been made at the Communities Committee, it is not a suggestion that the committee has decided to endorse at this stage.

Mike Pringle: I understand that.

The Convener: It was a statement made by a witness.

Mike Pringle: I think I know the answer to my question, but let us clear it up anyway. If the bill is passed and we extend ASBOs to under-16s, should such cases be dealt with by a court disposal or should they come under the children's hearings system?

Bernadette Monaghan: It would not be my preferred option to reduce the age at which ASBOs can be served, but having said that, I would not want such cases to be the subject of a court disposal. We must remember that overall levels of offending by young people have been static since about 1991. It is only since about 1999 that it has become a political issue with a lot of media attention. The issue has become focused in people's minds.

Although we have the children's hearings system, it does not mean that our young people are any more likely to offend than young people in other jurisdictions where such a system does not exist. We have heard about the situation in England this morning and what tends to happen there is that young people are pulled into a formal system to address minor behaviours and then they work their way through that system once they are in it. I would not like to see that happening in Scotland.

I have a problem with the age of 16 because, up to that age, young people get help and support through the hearings system, however limited. At the age of 16, however, if they have not turned their lives around, they become the responsibility of a new court system.

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Mike Pringle: We have already heard evidence on that. Some people would say that the age should be 18 and not 16. That is perhaps what you are indicating.

Bernadette Monaghan: Yes.

The Convener: Turning to slightly more technical matters, I notice that, in your response to the consultation, you were slightly concerned about the broad definition of antisocial behaviour. Does the bill adequately define the phrase?

Bernadette Monaghan: The definition is wide. My general comment would be that the bill is trying to address a whole raft of behaviour, ranging from what would appear to be very minor behaviour to more serious behaviour. Having said that, I do not live in a community that is plagued by such behaviour. We

have to acknowledge that there are communities out there that feel under stress, and that that we need to do something about that.

The definition is too wide as far as I am concerned, and it is quite subjective. It depends on what other people view as antisocial behaviour. What is normal behaviour among young people? They tend to hang about in groups. They reach an age when they do not want to be organised in youth clubs and so on, so they will want to hang about the streets. To what extent is that normal behaviour and to what extent does it become antisocial? That is an issue as far as the bill is concerned.

The Convener: I will move on to the power to disperse groups, which I noted from your response you were concerned about. Is it your specific concern that, because of what you have just explained about the definition of antisocial behaviour apparently being principally subjective, young people might be stigmatised if the power is deployed. Is that your principal anxiety?

Bernadette Monaghan: Yes, it is. I ask Patricia Bowerbank to comment further on that, because I know that there have been incidents of that in the youth club where she works.

Patricia Bowerbank: That is true. I can give you some examples of meetings that I have attended with young people and of young people being represented by police at community meetings. Police have commented on the fact that a majority of complaints and calls that they get from members of the community in question are about people playing football in the park. That takes up a lot of police time, and the young people feel that they have nowhere to go. If they cannot play in the park, where can they go?

I had a recent experience standing outside a youth club with a group of young people waiting to go into the club. Two very upper-middle-class, middle-age ladies ran towards them, screaming

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and shouting and calling them all sorts of names, because they felt that the young people were being intimidating by standing at the doorway that they were waiting to go through. Those young people feel isolated and feel that the relationships between them and adults have completely broken down. They really have no one else to turn to.

The Convener: Given your experience, it might be helpful to ask you about your assessment of what the proposed measures will do for relationships between the police and young people. The deployment of the facility to disperse people will rest with senior police officers.

Patricia Bowerbank: It will probably depend on the area in question and on the existing relationships between the police and young people there. In the area where I currently work, police come to the youth club every fortnight. Their visits are informal, and they talk about their jobs. The young people ask questions about what would happen if they got caught doing something or what happened to a certain person when they were caught doing something. They are learning about the criminal justice system and about the consequences of their possible actions.

If any issues have arisen between the police and one of the young people between the fortnightly visits, that is never mentioned when the police are at the youth club. As I said earlier, the relationships are strong and are based on equality and respect. If those relationships currently exist, I do not think that the bill will make much difference to them. However, the bill could compound bad relationships or a lack of relations between police and young people in other areas.

The Convener: Do you think that it would be preferable to delete the power?

Patricia Bowerbank: Yes.

Mike Pringle: I am interested in what you say about that. We heard in previous evidence that:

"Almost all of the young people who call to talk about the police give similar stories about being treated with utter disrespect and about facing aggression."—[*Official Report, Justice 2 Committee*, 16 December 2003; c 320.]

You would say that that does not apply in your area.

Patricia Bowerbank: That does not apply in my area, in my experience. When informally chatting to youth workers, young people tell us good points about the police in a personal way, mentioning them by name. They might, for example, say that a policeman is "a good lad" and give reasons for that.

Maureen Macmillan: I have a question.

The Convener: I was going to invite you to ask about parenting orders, but you are welcome to

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precede those questions with a question on the dispersal of groups.

Maureen Macmillan: In your youth work, have you come across cases in which young people have been intimidated by other groups of young people?

Patricia Bowerbank: Yes.

Maureen Macmillan: How do you resolve that? I thought that the powers to disperse groups might help to deal with a situation in which a group of young people was intimidating other young people.

Patricia Bowerbank: That is a huge issue in the area in which I work. There is a long road that runs through three villages and there is always some sort of problem. To overcome that, we opened an under-18s night club in the central village and invited everyone. That meant that, if issues had arisen, the youth workers, who had a relationship with all the young people, would speak to the young people who might have felt intimidated by another group and, as a result, would obtain their trust second-hand. The fact that those young people would then come into the group and start talking helped to resolve such problems.

People come to our youth club to cause trouble from villages within a radius of 12 or 13 miles. As youth workers, we make contact with and talk to them and our young people stand around with them and end up talking to them. Relationships are built that way. It is not all blue sky—there have been skirmishes, but we have managed to work through such situations.

The Convener: You are saying that the sort of situation that Maureen Macmillan outlined can be resolved at the moment.

Patricia Bowerbank: Yes.

Maureen Macmillan: I notice that, in your submission, you suggest that parenting orders might be counterproductive in that they could result in the

"family unit being split up"

or could mean that single working parents would have to give up work to supervise their child. You seem to imply that parenting orders would put an unnecessary strain on families, rather than benefit the children concerned. Are you totally opposed to parenting orders or do you think that there is a place for them in a very small minority of cases?

Bernadette Monaghan: We have to make it easy for parents to admit that they need help and support and to come forward to receive it. I was a children's panel member for nine years and, in many cases, it was the parents who needed help, because they were simply replicating their experience. My worry is that parenting orders

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would stigmatise people further and make them feel that they were bad parents and failures, which is counterproductive. I am not convinced that the order is necessary, although I accept that obtaining such an order would be the last step in a long process—a process that would involve costs. I would ask whether we have the services in the community to offer support to parents—rather than just the children.

When I sat on children's panels, it was always frustrating that we were providing services that were geared towards children, even though we recognised that parents needed support as well. Sometimes they were able to get it through children's centres and support groups. If we formalise the process and introduce parenting orders, that could be highly counterproductive. I do not have a clear picture of how they would work. The issues that we flagged up jumped out at us as being potential problems if we were to go down the road of adopting parenting orders.

My main concern is to avoid stigmatising families who are already under stress and who need help and support and need to know how to get it. Sometimes it was frustrating to have children on supervision, when we knew the difficulties that parents had in accessing support. We need to have resources in communities, such as groups and classes, to enable people to admit that they need help and to take the necessary steps. As I said, parents are often replicating a pattern that has been going on for years. They cannot meet their children's needs because they have so many needs of their own. It is a question of how to frame the measure and, in my view, parenting orders come across as quite punitive. We want to try to give parents the support and help that they need so that they are better able to be aware of their needs and to respond to the needs of their children.

Maureen Macmillan: You seem to think that there should be more investment in parenting classes. I am not sure to what extent such classes happen at the moment. How do you get parents to engage voluntarily? I presume that the orders would be made only if you could not get parents to engage voluntarily.

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Bernadette Monaghan: We get parents to engage through things such as children's centres. Many years ago, I worked in a large area in Edinburgh where there were children's centres. I do not know whether they are still there or what has happened to them, but that seemed to be a good model. Ostensibly, we were looking at the child's behaviour, but at the same time parents were invited in. Parents could meet other parents, share experiences and give one another support,

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which made them realise that they were not alone and were not the only ones with such problems.

We need to try those sorts of measures before we go down the road of introducing another order. Orders might not be used very much and they might be the last resort, but I do not think that it would be productive to try to impose an order on parents and to say, "You have failed." That will only make matters worse and there is a danger that it could have an impact on the children. We should try the support route and voluntary measures before going down that route.

Maureen Macmillan: I think that everybody would agree with that. You mentioned your experience of the children's hearings system and said that there was no way of addressing the problem of parenting. Do you think that a new court order is the best way of tackling that problem or would you like the children's hearings to be able to impose parenting orders?

The Convener: I think that our witnesses gave their view on that in an answer to Jackie Baillie earlier.

Jackie Baillie: No, that was about community reparation orders.

The Convener: Right. I am sorry.

Maureen Macmillan: What about parenting orders?

Bernadette Monaghan: I would not call the order a parenting order. We should consider the remit of the children's hearings system and its decision-making powers, which are designed to work in the best interests of the child. We recognise that a child grows up in the context of a parent or two parents and a community.

The hearings system probably already has powers to address such needs. What I am not so sure about is whether the services are out there. To be honest, it does not matter what decision the hearing makes; what is important is what happens thereafter. The same applies with a court. For me, the most important part is the quality of the intervention that comes next. For many of us who have been involved in the hearings system or who work in the field, the frustration is that, although we know what service a child or a family needs, that service is not always available. That, rather than the order or the decision, is the crucial issue.

The Convener: I know that Karen Whitefield wants to ask about restriction of liberty orders, but I would like to clarify something. I am interested in the evidence that you are giving. Do you sympathise with SACRO's view that there is a blurring of criminal law and social measures in the bill and that that could be counterproductive?

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Bernadette Monaghan: Yes, we share that view. We and NCH are members of the Scottish Consortium on Crime and Criminal Justice; through the consortium, we have submitted written evidence. The difficulty is that the bill is trying to deal with a whole range of measures, some of which fit neatly into a community safety framework and some of which do not. Youth justice and offending by young people should perhaps fit into the community safety framework, but that goes back to the issue of clarity about the role of the youth justice teams.

I believe that the whole social education approach—the original approach of the hearings system—is crucial. We must recognise that even the young people who go on to offend most persistently have a whole raft of problems and experiences that I, as an adult, would find extremely difficult to deal with. We therefore agree with SACRO's view.

The Convener: What would your advice be, then? Would you recommend that the bill should be piloted?

Bernadette Monaghan: My fundamental point is that we need to strengthen what we already have on the ground. We must

look again at the hearings system and consider rebranding it. That is happening through the children's hearings forum, an expert reference group that was set up specifically to redesign the hearings system. The group is considering whether the hearings system should prioritise and target particular groups of young people and children and families. It is considering what the hearings system should concentrate on and what it needs in order to do its work properly. The group is doing a rebranding and remarketing exercise on the hearings system.

Good systems are already in place—for example, youth justice teams and the investment of resources in addressing young people's offending behaviour. We must consider not only the areas where the system is working well, but the areas where it is not working. We must ascertain how the system can be made to work better. As my colleague from SACRO said, the developments that we are discussing are relatively new and have not had much time to demonstrate results.

There is a perception that we can put people through programmes and interventions and that they will somehow be cured at the end of that. However, many young people's problems are so entrenched that we will never achieve that. We must be clear about what we are trying to achieve. There will never be a one-off, immediate transformation. We seek a change in parents' or children's lifestyles over time.

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My view is that we should consider what we already have on the ground and strengthen existing frameworks. We should consider what services and resources are out there and what gaps must be plugged before we go down the line of having more orders and legislation. More money would have to be spent on implementing and processing those orders and more police time would be taken up with the dispersing of groups. As Patricia Bowerbank demonstrated, there are already informal ways at community level of building up relationships and resolving issues. We must strengthen such ways.

Karen Whitefield: Before I ask about restriction of liberty orders, I beg the convener's indulgence, as I want to ask Patricia Bowerbank a quick question about the dispersal of groups. She said succinctly that that proposal should not be in the bill. Without that measure, however, how would she deal with the situation that happens nightly in my constituency? Every night, between 40 and 50 young people congregate in a village in my constituency. Two hundred yards up the road there is a youth centre with a drop-in service that is run by young people for young people. That is a good community

project that provides a valuable service. Furthermore, many young people from the community and neighbouring villages qualify for free access to the local sports centre. A good, healthy-living centre operates in the community.

Despite the fact that young people have those opportunities, every night a group insists on congregating in one village, causing concern not only to the local residents but to many of the young people who want to access the youth project that is 200yd up the road. The police tell me that there is nothing that they can do. However, the bill would allow them to disperse such a group and to prevent it from going back to where it was. How would we deal with that problem without the proposed powers?

Patricia Bowerbank: The situation that you described sounds to me like an excellent opportunity to do some really good youth work. If 50 young people are congregating in the same place, I would send in youth workers to talk to them to work out what else they want to do.

Karen Whitefield: North Lanarkshire Council has done that. Young people are running a youth project 200yd up the road. The situation is not for a minute about an older generation suggesting that it has all the solutions for what young people want. It is about a community project that is run by young people for young people. However, young people in the community are prevented from accessing the service by other young people from the community and neighbouring communities who choose to congregate and intimidate. Someone has to take responsibility for those

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actions. The local authority has introduced youth workers, a service is being delivered and there are all sorts of alternatives to such behaviour. However, I am not convinced that we have sufficient powers to address the problem.

Patricia Bowerbank: I understand that that is an intimidating situation for young people who want to use the facility. However, as an adult, I choose not to go to some places because I prefer others or because I have different relationships with different groups of people. Still, you are right to say that something has to be done. If intimidation is going on and is putting people off, I would send in youth workers to work with the people and help them to set up a place that is appropriate to them and to question why they are doing what they are doing, what they are getting from it, what their long-term goals are and what the purpose of it is. I cannot comment

further, as I would have to do the work first. I cannot see the benefit of police dispersal. Where would the young people go? They would just go somewhere else and carry out the same sort of aggravation.

Karen Whitefield: I accept that they may well go somewhere else, but perhaps they would not be able to congregate in the one community. They would be dispersed back into their own communities and, we hope, take up some of the opportunities and activities that are on offer there. We should engage with those young people, but I am not convinced that, if we do not have the proposed powers, we will be able to deal with the problem.

Jackie Baillie: I would love to live in the village that you work in, Patricia. Because I am older than you—unfortunately—I probably have considerably more experience of working in communities and I recognise that all individuals are just that: they are individual and different, irrespective of whether they are young, middle aged or old. They require different responses because of their different circumstances. Some responses will work, some will not work; it is not true to say that everything works. Your solution to Karen Whitefield's problem is what North Lanarkshire Council has tried and failed to deliver. Therefore, do you not think that there should be more in the toolbox for people to use, recognising that different people in different locations will be in different circumstances?

Patricia Bowerbank: I recognise that. However, I do not know what the young people would learn from police dispersal.

Jackie Baillie: We are driving at the need for a variety of responses.

Karen Whitefield: Perhaps we can move on to restriction of liberty orders. The bill proposes that young people under 16 will, in some circumstances, be tagged. Do you believe that the

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use of restriction of liberty orders will be helpful or useful in addressing the offending behaviour of under-16s?

Bernadette Monaghan: I do not think that restriction of liberty orders, whether for under-16s or over-16s, are useful by themselves. All that they do is contain somebody; they do not address why that person is doing what they are doing and they do not help them to move on from that. I would not be in favour of their use for under-16s because they may become a kind of

status symbol. For young people, negative attention is sometimes better than no attention. I would worry about that.

The use of restriction of liberty orders as an alternative to secure accommodation contains young people in the situation that may be a contributory factor to why they would otherwise end up in secure accommodation. We must remember that most young people end up in secure accommodation for a range of reasons, not necessarily just for offending. Offending is not the first and foremost reason why they are there. I would, therefore, be cautious about that proposal.

Karen Whitefield: I accept that if restriction of liberty orders are used in isolation—if somebody has committed an offence and the solution is to tag them—that will not address the problem at all. However, if the use of restriction of liberty orders involves engaging with the young person and the reasons for their offending behaviour, as well as addressing the causes of their offending behaviour and trying to help them to change their behaviour, that might be preferable. Allowing that to happen in the community instead of in secure accommodation might also be preferable.

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Bernadette Monaghan: It might be preferable. Secure accommodation is sometimes needed for a small number of young people for a short period of time, largely when those young people are a danger to themselves. In such cases, it is crucial that we get them in one place long enough so that they can begin to address certain issues. Although that could be done through a restriction of liberty order, one would have to be very clear that a young person would be in a certain place for a certain period of time in order to begin to carry out the work that was needed.

I do not see the value in using restriction of liberty orders on their own, because one would simply contain those young people without addressing any of the reasons why they ended up in such a situation. Very often the young people who end up in secure accommodation have extremely chaotic lifestyles and, as I have said, are more of a danger to themselves than to the community. Part of the purpose of such an

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approach is to put them into some reasonably stable situation where we can get them down off the walls and try to carry out the work with them. If you are saying that we could do that in

the community as part of a package of measures, I would cautiously support you.

The Convener: Have the witnesses any final points that they would like to make?

Bernadette Monaghan: I should mention that we will leave some information packs about Apex Scotland, which will give members an idea of the whole range of activities in which we are involved. If you want to visit any of our services, you are more than welcome to do so.

The Convener: Thank you for that information, which I am sure committee members will welcome. We have also noted your invitation.

I thank both witnesses for attending this morning's meeting. We have found the session genuinely interesting.