



THE EDINBURGH STUDY OF
YOUTH TRANSITIONS AND CRIME:
KEY FINDINGS AT AGES 12 AND 13

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April 2001

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The rise in crime is one of the most striking social changes since the Second World War. Police recorded crime rose dramatically between 1950 and the mid 1990s in all developed countries (except Japan) and, because of the shape of the age-crime curve, this is to a large extent the result of an increase in misconduct and ordinary crimes committed by young people (Smith, 1995). This increase in problem behaviour among young people has also been paralleled by post-war increases in other psychosocial disorders during the teenage years, such as suicide, eating disorders and personality dysfunctions (Smith & Rutter, 1995). These major societal changes have meant that youth crime, and indeed issues in relation to young people in general, have become a salient political issue

As a result of these societal and political developments, studies into changes in criminal offending over the life course are critical to contemporary criminology. By far the most important previous British study in this field is the Cambridge Study of Delinquent Development, a major longitudinal study which continues to study the determinants and predictability of criminal offending among a group of people who were 8 years old in 1961 (Farrington and West, 1990). However, the origins of this study are somewhat outdated and contemporary studies are needed, combining both psychological and sociological approaches, to focus on a substantially different set of intellectual and policy questions.

Aims of the Edinburgh Study

The Edinburgh Study of Youth Transitions and Crime is a major longitudinal of around 4,300 young people who started their first year of secondary school in the City of Edinburgh in August 1998, when most of them were around 11½ and 12½ years of age. The study aims to further our understanding of criminal behaviour among young people by studying them over a key period of development. There are four key objectives underpinning the study:

- i. To investigate and identify the factors which impact on young people's offending behaviour and the processes which are involved.
- ii. To examine these factors and processes within 3 main contexts:
 - individual development through the life course;
 - the impact of interactions with formal agencies of social control and law enforcement;
 - the effect of the physical and social structure of the individual's neighbourhood.
- iii. Within each of the above three contexts, to examine the striking differences between the extent and patterns of criminal offending between males and females.

- iv. To contribute towards the development and empirical evaluation of theories which explain people's involvement in criminal offending behaviour, particularly those who go on to become serious and persistent offenders.

Design of the Study

Age of the cohort

The Edinburgh Study was not concerned with identifying the childhood origins of criminal offending. Instead, it aimed to explain why such inclinations among some were translated into serious, frequent and persistent offending and why some criminal careers end far sooner than others. For this reason, it was decided to start in early adolescence and continue on to around the age of 30. This is in marked contrast to other studies such as the Dunedin Study, which started at birth (Silva and Stanton, 1996) or the Cambridge Study which started in middle childhood (Farrington and West, 1990). These studies show that, although useful predictions of later delinquency can be made in childhood, there are many 'false positives': that is, many of those predicted to be delinquent turn out not to have serious criminal careers. This highlights the importance of influences during adolescence that 'convert' individuals at risk of offending into involvement in long-term criminal careers.

It was important to strike a careful balance between collecting data from as early an age as possible and ensuring that these data were reliable. The selected population was every pupil enrolled in the first year of secondary school in Edinburgh during the autumn of 1998, with an average age of approximately 12. There were two main reasons for this. From a practical point of view, it was easier to target secondary schools than primary schools, since there were far fewer of them. And from a methodological point of view, the majority of those at age 12 could be expected to cope with a self-completion questionnaire and give reliable information about themselves. In addition, available evidence suggested that very few children would have dropped out of the school system by this age.

Location of the study

As one of the main aims of the study was to compare the developmental paths of young people growing up in dissimilar neighborhoods, choosing the location of the study was important. One possibility would have been to draw a representative sample of Scottish youth from a variety of different geographical areas. This approach was rejected for two reasons. First, a truly representative sample would probably have yielded too small a number of young people within each neighbourhood to support analysis of community effects. Second, the organisational problems and the costs of a study dispersed across Scotland would have been far greater than those of a study concentrated in a single city. It was therefore decided to carry out the study within the City of Edinburgh alone and to cover a whole one year cohort of young people.

This focus on the city of Edinburgh has the slight disadvantage that the subjects are not truly representative of the youth of Scotland. However, this is easily outweighed by the enormous advantages in terms of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. In particular, it greatly reduces the number of organisations involved in the study. Yet at the same time, the city of Edinburgh comprises enormous diversity, including all the extremes of poverty and wealth, high and low crime areas, high and low incidence of drug abuse, that are contained within urban areas of Britain as a whole. There were also substantial advantages to linking the University's research to its local community, such as enhancing the likelihood of support and benefiting the local community from the results.

The large, single-cohort design

The simplicity of this design is very different from the accelerated longitudinal design promoted by Tonry, Ohlin and Farrington (1991). Starting with a cohort aged around 12 meant the single cohort design was more efficient, in terms of the number of subjects who could be covered within the budget by concentrating on a single year group during fieldwork. In addition, studying a single school year would be less disruptive to schools, achieving higher level of school participation and better response rates.

Further, it was judged that statistical complications in analysis of multiple cohorts would substantially offset any gain and there would be a considerable advantage in having continuous life histories over the whole period from age 12 to 30 for the same individuals instead of pasting together the time segments covered by separate cohorts. Finally, the purity of the design, which attempts to follow all young people in Edinburgh within one age group, means it is easier to estimate response rates, to collect information about the whole target population (i.e. non-respondents) and therefore to estimate sample bias.

The size of the cohort was estimated to be around 3,500 to 4,000 at the outset, but later turned out to be around 4,300. The scale of the sample size had particular advantages. First, the importance of studying gender differences meant that a large enough sample had to be achieved to conduct detailed, disaggregate analysis on delinquency and then subject this to further analysis by gender. In particular, the sample had to be large enough to capture a significant number of persistent and serious offenders, who would not become apparent until several years into the study, allowing for some level of attrition.

The multiple methods approach

A unique feature of the Edinburgh Study is the complexity of its design which involves a large, single-cohort longitudinal study incorporating multiple methods of data collection. The objectives underpinning the study determined that both a mixed methodology and a variety of different data sources would be required in order that young people's offending behaviour could be examined on a number of levels. At a primary level, quantitative self report data was required to estimate the extent and nature of youth offending, while qualitative information was needed to contextualise

this. At a secondary level, quantitative and qualitative data were required from the perspective of those responsible for exerting social controls over young people: namely parents, schools and formal agencies of control. While, at a tertiary level, social and geographical data were required to examine patterns of offending within the young people's neighbourhoods and possible neighbourhood effects on offending.

In order to target a large cohort of young people, the most feasible and cost effective method of data collection was to administer a self-completion questionnaire in schools. Annual sweeps of data collection were planned to build up a continuous picture of young people's offending, thereby providing an accurate and detailed description of individual offending levels over time, which often take place in bursts. To supplement this large-scale quantitative element of the study, it was necessary to add contextual detail about the nature and meaning of offending behaviour for young people. Therefore, semi-structured interviews with a sample of the cohort were incorporated into the design, to be conducted on a periodic basis.

One of the main concerns about the self-report methodology is that respondents may exaggerate or under-report their own offending behaviour – whether intended or accidental. Criminologists who have reviewed the extensive evidence on the validity and reliability of self-reports have generally come up with fairly optimistic conclusions (e.g. Huizinga, 1991). And it is clear from comparisons with official records and the reports of parents, teachers and peers that respondents do reveal much of their offending, although it is difficult in principle to establish how many of them exaggerate and to what extent.

Although the failings of self-reports should not be minimised, there is no alternative method of describing most offending, and other measures (such as convictions) are even more unreliable. This emphasises the importance of using other measures, and a central feature of the Edinburgh Study is the range of rich secondary data sources being used to provide information about the cohort, adding a whole extra dimension to the data provided by individuals about their own behaviour.

Parents are the most important source of informal social control, therefore, a survey of family functioning was planned with the main parent or carer of every cohort member. As well as providing a certain level of validation about self-reported offending, this survey will provide data on family background, significant life events during childhood and assess the extent to which offending behaviour may be linked to factors within the home environment¹.

Schools also play an important role in controlling the activities of young people, so relevant data was sought from school records and the views of teachers about individuals' pro-social and problematic behaviour were ascertained by means of a brief questionnaire. Finally, the perspective of two key Scottish agencies of formal social control with a responsibility for engaging with young people in need or in trouble was sought by examining the records of the Social Work Department (SWD) and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA). The data extracted

¹ The survey of family functioning is due to be conducted in the Autumn of 2001.

from these records was also used to supplement and, as far as possible, validate the self-reported offending data.² The results of these data are presented in chapter 13.

Finally, one of the key aims of the study is to integrate the study of individual differences and life histories with the study of the effects of communities and the broader social context in which offending takes place. In order to help relate young people's offending histories to various aspects of the social geography of where they live, a Geographic Information System (GIS) has been developed. A range of geocoded social, physical and economic data about the City of Edinburgh, including 1991 census data and 1997 police recorded crime data, were loaded into a GIS software package.

Work was then carried out to separate Edinburgh into 91 distinct geographical neighborhoods, using an index of social deprivation as a guide, in order that levels of offending amongst the cohort could be visualised at the neighbourhood level. Bringing these two sources of data together has been invaluable in trying to differentiate between individual and neighbourhood effects on offending during analysis. The results of this analysis are reported in chapter 14.

To supplement the analysis of offending and neighbourhood, case studies were carried out in two of these newly defined neighborhoods. The two areas chosen were contiguous, with similar levels of social deprivation, but contrasting crime rates. By studying these two areas, the aim was to identify the mechanisms or processes that may have produced the relatively low level of crime in one neighbourhood and the relatively high level in the other. The findings of the case study work are reported in chapter 15. This aspect of the study will be further supplemented by a study of social networks and community structures in Edinburgh neighborhoods based on a survey of the general population, to be carried out in 2002.

Access to schools

The majority of pupils in Edinburgh attend state-run mainstream secondary schools, although it is estimated that around a quarter of pupils attending schools in Edinburgh are in the independent sector, which is disproportionately large compared with many other cities. Therefore, it was important to include as many of these schools as possible. In addition, to make the cohort truly representative, it was vital to include the small, but important, minority of vulnerable and sometimes problematic children attending schools for children with special educational needs.

A prolonged process of negotiation was required to secure access to all the relevant schools. Agreement in principle was sought from the City of Edinburgh Council Education Department to contact all the relevant state-run schools. Thereafter, the head teachers of every mainstream and special needs secondary school were approached in order to seek their agreement to participate. The head teachers of the relevant independent sector schools were also approached individually, although there was no governing body to which representation could be made about negotiating access to these schools in advance.

² Access to police records is currently being negotiated.

Access was eventually secured to 92 per cent of the young people who were enrolled as first year pupils at Edinburgh secondary schools in the autumn of 1998, as shown in Table 1.1. All 23 mainstream schools agreed to participate, which was crucial since they accounted for 78.5 per cent of the eligible population. The independent schools accounted for 19.5 per cent of all pupils in the relevant year group; however, only 8 agreed to participate which meant coverage was restricted to 12 per cent. The special schools accounted for only 2 per cent of the eligible population, although their inclusion was important to ensure the representation of potentially marginalised and vulnerable young people. Nine of the 12 special schools agreed to participate, representing 1.5 per cent of the eligible population.

Table 1.1: Survey coverage of Edinburgh school pupils - sweep 1

	Mainstream	Independent	Special needs	Totals
Pupils attending all eligible schools in Edinburgh (n)	3803	948	95	4846
Pupils attending participating schools (n)	3803	594	71	4468
Coverage of all eligible pupils (%)	100%	66%	75%	92%

1. These figures do not take account of children opted out in sweeps one or two, which are shown in Table 1.3.

During discussions with both the independent and special schools, it emerged that there was likely to be a substantial increase in the intake of both school sectors over the second and third years of the study. As the number of pupils attending these schools was relatively small in comparison to the mainstream schools, a decision was taken to include any new pupils entering the relevant year group up to the third year of data collection. For practical reasons, it was also agreed that any pupils who moved away from the Edinburgh area during sweeps two and three would not be tracked, although pupils moving to Local Authority funded special or residential schools situated outwith Edinburgh would be followed. Thus, the final cohort to be tracked longitudinally will be established at the end of year three of the study.

A considerable number of new pupils did join the cohort in sweep two, although an almost equal number moved away from the Edinburgh area. Overall, the number of pupils attending participating schools increased by only 0.7 per cent during sweep two. This does conceal a considerable amount of movement within the cohort, however, as shown in Table 1.2. The large number of both new pupils and leavers in mainstream schools resulted in a net gain of only 0.1 per cent although, as expected, the net gain at the independent schools was higher at 4.4 per cent. The number of pupils attending special schools increased by 28.2 per cent, although this large rise was largely due to movements by existing cohort members rather than new pupils joining the cohort.

Table 1.2: Survey coverage of Edinburgh school pupils - sweep 2

	Mainstream	Independent	Special needs	Totals
Pupils attending participating schools (n)	3786	620	91	4497
Change in population size (%)	-0.4%	+4.4%	+28.2%	+0.7%

Parental consent

Given the age of the cohort members, it was necessary to contact parents in advance of fieldwork to inform them about the study and seek their consent. There was concern that an opt-in method would yield a low response rate, particularly among certain sections of the population, which would significantly skew the characteristics of the cohort and undermine the validity of any survey results. As it was crucial that the cohort should comprise as complete and representative population of young people as possible, the various agencies involved in the study agreed that an opt-out consent method should be adopted. However, assurances had to be given that the Education Department child protection guidelines would be stringently followed and that participation would not be detrimental to the cohort members.

Prior to sweep one fieldwork, a letter was issued to all parents explaining the objectives and coverage of the study, the implications of participation and stating that their child could be opted-out of the study by returning a tear-off slip to the school. It was not considered necessary to repeat this exercise each year. However, an updated letter was sent to the parents of all new pupils who joined the cohort in sweep two. Cohort members also had the opportunity to opt out of the study during fieldwork and, in a few rare cases, school staff took the decision to opt pupils out if participation at that time was not felt to be in their best interests.

Table 1.3, below, reveals that the opt-out rates in both sweeps one and two varied little and the overall rates were very low in survey terms. It is particularly interesting that the opt out rates at the mainstream and independent schools were virtually identical during both sweeps, which suggests that opting out was unrelated to social class. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the opt-out rate in the special schools was considerably higher than that of the other school types, although this represents a very small number of people in real terms.

Table 1.3: Opt out rates by school sector during sweeps 1 and 2

	Mainstream	Independent	Special needs	Totals
Sweep one				
Pupils opted out by parents or school (n)	122	20	9	151
Self opt outs (n)	4	0	0	4
Potential cohort opted out (%)	3.3%	3.4%	12.7%	3.5%
Sweep two				
Pupils opted out by parents or school (n)	115	19	9	143
Self opt outs (n)	7	1	2	10
Potential cohort opted out (%)	3.2%	3.2%	12.1%	3.4%

Confidentiality

To reassure respondents about reporting sensitive information and encourage honest reporting, particularly about their own offending behaviour, a complete guarantee of confidentiality was given. As shown in Table 1.3, above, the number of self opt-outs was very low at both sweeps which suggests that few respondents were excessively worried about taking part, although there would be concern if this increasing trend continued in future sweeps. A few of those who opted themselves out did so during classroom fieldwork, but most were in response to approaches at home and the impression given was that they were more concerned with giving up their free time than confidentiality.

Issuing a complete guarantee of confidentiality did have consequences for the content of the survey. It was considered that early sexual activity might be correlated with offending behaviour. However, there was a danger that such questions might elicit disclosures of sexual abuse which, under the child protection guidelines, would have to be reported to the school authorities. Thus, the guarantee of confidentiality would have had to be qualified. Discussions with a team of researchers conducting a study of sexual health in Edinburgh at the time revealed that this approach led to lower reporting of sexual activity than comparative research in other cities where confidentiality was assured. Since there was a danger that this could impact upon self reports of offending, it was agreed that questions about sexual activity would be included only once the cohort reached the age of legal consent.

Questionnaire design and piloting

Self completion questionnaires were developed following detailed examination of data collection instruments from a variety of other studies, many of which involved young people. There was also extensive consultation with researchers in the UK and those involved in longitudinal studies of crime and young people in the US and New Zealand. This was particularly important to ensure that certain aspects of the questionnaires would be comparable with other similar studies.

Table 1.4 presents a summary of the broad themes which were included in the questionnaires during the first two sweeps. Within each theme, there were a number of questions focusing on different aspects of the individual's characteristics and behaviour. A set of core questions was devised for inclusion in every sweep to allow comparable, longitudinal analysis of self reported delinquency, adversarial health behaviours, friend's delinquency, experience of victimisation and contact with the police. Other questions were designed with the intention of asking them at regular intervals, such as personality measures (including self esteem, alienation and impulsivity) and questions about neighbourhood and school, while some were intended simply to be one-off questions.

Table 1.4: Broad questionnaire themes at sweeps 1 and 2

	Sweep one	Sweep two
Family structure & care experience	✓	✓
Parental relationships	✓	✓
Sibling relationships	×	✓
Leisure activities	✓	✓
Personality characteristics	✓	✓
Adversarial health measures	✓	✓
Neighbourhood	✓	×
Self reported delinquency	✓	✓
Friends' characteristics and delinquency	✓	✓
Moral judgements and values	✓	×
Commitment to and experience of school	×	✓
Experience of victimisation	✓	✓
Experience of bullying	×	✓
Contact with the police	✓	✓
Contact with other social agencies	×	✓

One of the most important considerations in designing the questionnaire was the reference period. Most self-report studies examine the events of the previous calendar year, however, this posed two problems. First, the sweep one questionnaire was intended to establish a baseline picture of various aspects of respondents' lives, in particular their offending behaviour. Therefore, the first year cohort were asked about things that had 'ever' happened, no matter how long ago.

For subsequent sweeps, it was agreed that the reference period should cover the previous year, thus providing a continuous account of their offending behaviour. However, there were concerns that young people would find it difficult to conceptualise events in terms of the calendar year. Therefore, sweep two asked about events during the previous school year i.e. from the beginning of first year to the end of the summer holidays prior to the start of second year at school³.

Although many questions were derived from existing questionnaires, careful piloting was necessary to check the level and integrity of the questions, to validate certain scales and to test out the survey administration procedure. Piloting for sweep one was carried out in three phases with age-matched pupils from secondary schools outside Edinburgh. Focus group discussions were conducted first to test out concepts, language and general comprehension of key issues. Then draft questionnaire sections were piloted to check for problems with specific questions or themes and, finally, a full draft questionnaire was piloted on a year group of young people to test out the content, level and length of the proposed instrument. With the exception of the focus groups, the same piloting procedure was adopted in sweep two.

During sweep one piloting, an issue arose over the design of the self reported delinquency section of the questionnaire. In order to collect more data about offending behaviour, respondents who said 'yes' to any of the delinquency questions were routed to a set of follow-up questions, while a 'no' response allowed the respondent to skip past the follow-ups. There was concern that some respondents might adopt a negative response pattern in order to proceed more quickly through the questionnaire. Therefore, two versions of the final questionnaire were produced, with the self-report delinquency questions in reverse order, to act as a validity check. Subsequent analysis of the sweep one data showed few significant differences in reported offending between the two versions and no evidence of a systematic response bias. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 3 of this report.

Fieldwork in schools

Given the size of the cohort, the most feasible way to administer the self-completion questionnaires was in school classrooms. This required a detailed fieldwork timetable to be devised in order to accommodate the preferred times of all 39 participating schools. In addition, numerous supplementary sessions had to be arranged to capture absentees. The questionnaire was designed to be completed in an average of 30 minutes, but a minimum of 1 hour per class was requested to allow respondents of all levels of educational ability to complete it comfortably. Given the confidential nature

³ This will need to be reconsidered when the cohort reach school leaving age.

of the study, the research team took responsibility for administering the questionnaires and teachers were asked to take no part in the fieldwork.

A very structured administration procedure was adopted to ensure that fieldwork was conducted uniformly across every classroom. The aims of the study were fully explained to the respondents and detailed instructions were given about how to complete the questionnaire, particularly in relation to the routing questions. Most importantly, pupils were told that the questionnaire was completely confidential and, to emphasise this, they were asked to sit separately in 'exam like' conditions. On the whole, pupils were extremely co-operative. However, in a small number of cases pupils were asked to move to another seat if they persisted in talking to a neighbour.

It was stressed that the questionnaire was not a test of their reading or writing ability. A researcher was on hand at all times and respondents were encouraged to ask for help with anything they did not understand. Due to the careful design of the questionnaire, most of the cohort were capable of completing the questionnaire on their own well within the time-scale. However, school learning support staff were asked in advance to identify individuals who would require additional assistance due to learning difficulties or other problems. Twelve per cent of the cohort were identified as needing help in sweep one, falling to 9.3 per cent in sweep two, although many more than that received some advice or assistance.

Extra researchers were employed to provide support and reassurance to pupils with learning or other difficulties. A flexible approach was required, but three main strategies were used. Those with mild learning difficulties were kept in the classroom and assisted as much as necessary by a reader in class. Those with moderate reading or comprehension problems were taken out of the classroom and put into small groups with a reader to provide more help. Finally, those with severe learning difficulties or behavioural problems were interviewed on a one to one basis. All participants attending special schools were given one to one help, although there were a few who could not respond due to severe comprehension problems (see Table 1.5, below).

Non-response rates

The bulk of fieldwork in schools was conducted between September and December during both sweeps, although it was not fully completed until the following March during sweep one and February during sweep two. This was primarily due to the difficulties of tracking pupils who were persistently absent from school. As far as possible, respondents were pursued by making return visits to schools. However, it proved impossible to gain access through schools to a small number of persistent truants, long-term sick children and temporarily or permanently excluded children. Therefore, attempts were made to gain access to these respondents at home.

Attempts to arrange home visits were problematic. The research team did not have access to parental names and addresses and, therefore, contact attempts had to be made via the schools. Many parents failed to respond to the letters sent home and no follow up attempts could be made due to the lack of address information. In sweep

one, letters were sent to the parents of 27 pupils⁴, to which there were nine positive and four negative responses. In sweep two, letters were issued to 50 parents producing eight positive and five negative responses. Nevertheless, with a persistent approach, Table 1.5 shows that the non-response rates for sweeps one and two of the study were exceptionally low at 0.3 per cent and 1.0 per cent respectively.⁵

Table 1.5: Non-response rates by school sector - sweeps 1 and 2

	Mainstream	Independent	Special needs	Totals
Sweep one				
Non-respondents (n)	8	0	5*	13
Non-response (%)	0.2%	0%	7.0%	0.3%
Sweep two				
Non-respondents (n)	34	0	11**	45
Non-response (%)	0.9%	0%	12.1%	1.0%

* All 5 were unable to comprehend the questionnaire.

** 8 of the 11 were unable to comprehend the questionnaire.

Participation rates

One of the most important issues for self-report studies is to achieve a high participation rate, since non-respondents have typically been shown to be more likely than average to be engaged in more serious offending (Aye Maung, 1995). Table 1.6 shows the proportion of pupils in each school sector that took part in the Edinburgh Study during sweeps one and two, taking into account both the opt outs and the non-respondents. However, compared with a response rate for the 1998 Youth Lifestyles Survey of 69 per cent (Flood-Page et al, 2000), the success of the Edinburgh Study is clear.

Not only were the participation rates for the mainstream and independent schools very high, but there was very little difference between them in both sweeps which suggests that the cohort was representative of both populations. The participation rate for pupils attending special schools was lower, particularly in sweep two. Nevertheless, as the number of pupils at special schools was so small this would be unlikely to have a dramatic effect on the findings.

⁴ Some of these children were subsequently picked up at school.

⁵ These non-response rates include all those who could not be contacted by the research team and those who were unable to respond due to comprehension problems.

Table 1.6: Participation rates by school sector - sweeps 1 and 2

	Mainstream	Independent	Special needs	Totals
Sweep one				
No. of participants	3669	574	57	4300
% of school population taking part in cohort	96.5%	96.6%	80.3%	96.2%
Sweep two				
No. of participants	3630	600	69	4299
% of school population taking part in cohort	95.9%	96.8%	75.8%	95.6%

Aims and structure of the report

The aim of this report is to present the key findings from the first three years of the Edinburgh Study, covering two sweeps of data collection. As the findings cover a broad range of topic areas, it is beyond the scope of this initial report to include an extensive review of the literature or a detailed discussion of theoretical issues. The content of the report is mainly descriptive, although relevant contextual information is referred to in each chapter. A concluding section is given at the end of each chapter, to sum up the findings, identify further areas of analysis and contemplate the issues for future stages of the Edinburgh Study.

This chapter has outlined the aims, design and methodology of the study. More detailed information about the way in which the study was carried out is contained in the Edinburgh Study Technical Report (McVie, 2001). The subsequent chapters present key findings about various specific aspects of the study. Throughout the analysis, reference is made to various key characteristics of the cohort, most commonly gender and social class, and details of these characteristics are given in chapter two. Chapter three presents a comprehensive analysis of the self-reported delinquency of the cohort at sweeps one and two, including other problematic behaviours such as drinking, smoking and drug use. Computation of the key offending variables used in analysis throughout the rest of the report is described here.

Chapter four examines the relationship between youth and the police in the context of their offending behaviour and, particularly, their social class. The relationship between self-reported offending and self-confessed victimisation is considered in chapter five, while the link between personality characteristics and delinquency are explored in chapter six. The important associations between aspects of parental supervision, control and relationships and delinquency are described in chapter seven. Chapters eight and nine consider the importance of lifestyle and leisure activities and the influence of peers on offending. Young people's attitudes towards and experiences at school are detailed in chapter 10, including the relationship between

truancy and offending more generally, while chapter 12 looks at the relationship between delinquency and teacher's ratings of pro-social and problematic behaviour.

Chapter 11 considers how moral judgements and values relate to delinquency, looking both at perceptions of seriousness about criminal acts and aspects of moral neutralisation. Chapter 13 examines the extent to which members of the cohort had had contact with two official agencies of formal social control, namely the social work department and the children's hearing system. The associations between self-reported delinquency and official evidence of offending are explored, and aspects of validity contemplated. Chapter 14 presents the findings from the exploration of social geography as it relates to individual offending, and considers the complex interaction between individual and neighbourhood effects as they relate to offending. Finally, chapter 15 describes the case study research in two neighbouring areas and presents some tentative conclusions explaining the reasons for differing crime levels in areas with similar levels of social deprivation.