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CSJ backs gangs plan and calls for 'relentless effort' to make streets safe

Gavin Poole, Executive Director of the CSJ, has issued the following statement on the day the Government publishes its anti-gangs strategy:

"The publication of the Government's anti-gangs strategy is a welcome first step in confronting the UK's gang crisis. It must now be followed by relentless effort to rid our communities of this violent behaviour and tragic waste.

"This summer's rioting and disorder put street gangs back on the political agenda. The CSJ has been setting out its action plan to deal with streets gangs for several years.

"And it is right that Ministers have taken the centre's 2009 report, *Dying to Belong*, as the basis for its new strategy.

"Decent people have been picking up the pieces of failed government policy on gangs for years, whilst those with the power to act were blind to the challenge.

"It is imperative that today's commitments become tomorrow's results.

"This must mean the firmest law enforcement *and* action to offer gang members a way out.

"It means the best of our police teams working with the best of our charities.

"And crucially, it has to mean intervention in the most dysfunctional families and schools - to turn their tide of chaos and stop the gangs' conveyor belt.

"Now everyone - across Westminster, local government, police teams, charities, schools and families - must work to ensure that we restore order and hope to the neighbourhoods under siege from the destruction gangs bring.

"Failure to do so will mean more of the same – more violence, more blood spilled, more economic instability and more social breakdown."

Please direct all media inquiries to Nick Wood of Media Intelligence Partners Ltd on 07889 617003 or 0203 008 8146 or Alistair Thompson on 07970 162225 or 0203 008 8145.

The CSJ's Executive Director, Gavin Poole, and its Policy Director, Christian Guy, are available for comment.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

In 2009 the Centre for Social Justice published its landmark report on street gangs, *Dying to Belong*, which set out a short, medium and long-term strategy to tackle street gangs, including a clear definition of what a gang is.

The *Dying to Belong* report, including its executive summary, can be accessed here:
<http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/client/downloads/DyingtoBelongFullReport.pdf>

The Centre for Social Justice is an independent think tank established, by Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP in 2004, to seek effective solutions to the poverty that blights parts of Britain.

In July 2007 the group published *Breakthrough Britain: ending the Costs of Social Breakdown*. The paper presented over 190 policy proposals aimed at ending the growing social divide in Britain.

Subsequent reports have put forward proposals for reform of the police, prisons, social housing, the asylum system and family law. Other reports have dealt with early intervention to help families with young children and a plan to beat poverty in older age.

The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP stood down as Chairman of the Centre on his appointment as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in May 2010 and is now the Founder and Patron.