

Community Safety Intelligence Assessment
Anti-social Behaviour
Summary and Recommendations

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Introduction

This document summarises the three Community Safety Intelligence Assessment documents for Anti-social Behaviour.

- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment: Anti-social Behaviour: An Assessment of Offending Behaviour, Vulnerability and Victims of Crime; Tara Lucey; November 2013
- Community Safety Intelligence Assessment: Anti-social Behaviour Technical Report 2: Good Practice; Rebecca Eckersley; January 2014
- Community Safety Intelligence Assessment: Anti-Social Behaviour Technical Report 3: Service Mapping; Mike Przybysz; March 2014

These reports gave an update on the current status in Lancashire in terms of the extent, nature and impact of Anti-social Behaviour (ASB), the services and organisation involved in dealing with and resolving cases, and examples of good practice to take forward to provide a consistent and excellent service to the communities of Lancashire by preventing and reducing Anti-social Behaviour.

Drawing from the analysis, mapping and research this document recommends how to progress the prevention, reduction and support for victims of ASB in the future in Lancashire.

Summary

Anti-social Behaviour is:

*'acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household.'*¹

Nationally Police record their data into three categories: personal, where behaviour is targeted at an individual or group; nuisance, this accounts for 61% of ASB recorded by the police and is defined by its impact on a local community in general; and environmental ASB which impacts on the surrounding area and is more often reported to and dealt with by councils rather than the police. The majority of reports of ASB are made to the police, registered providers of housing (RPs) and local authorities. Discrepancies in categorising ASB resulted in over recording nuisance ASB which in hindsight should have been recorded as personal; research in Preston found that this appeared incorrect in approximately 40% of cases, and in particular those relating to noise.

In the fiscal year 2012/13 the annual rate of anti-social behaviour was 62 incidents per 1,000 population according to police data. The most common type of behaviour in the personal ASB category was malicious communications, threats, verbal abuse, and noise nuisance. A prominent feature of personal ASB is often a relationship between the victim and the perpetrator and in 35% of cases the victim and perpetrator were neighbours. Perpetrators of personal ASB were most commonly adult and male, victims were most commonly adult.

Similarly neighbours featured as a prominent theme in data for nuisance ASB (21%), the majority of which involved noise. Noise, and in particular neighbour-related noise, was also a key theme in council and housing association data. Youths were identified as the main perpetrators of nuisance ASB and

¹ See <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/section/1>

males more often than females. There was a large proportion of incidents caused by groups (42%). The victim was most commonly adult.

Repeat occurrences were common amongst personal and nuisance ASB with 41% and 44% of sampled incidents indicating that the incident was a repeat or regular occurrence.

The level of harm caused to victims by anti-social behaviour doesn't always tally with the 'seriousness' of the offence. Mental health, physical disability and repeat victimisation can all increase the risk of becoming a victim of ASB and also the negative impacts of such victimisation. Women, younger people and repeat victims are more likely to perceive the ASB they are experiencing as personal, in addition personal ASB is associated with higher levels of harm. It is noteworthy that different forms of vulnerability are not mutually exclusive, and where they intersect and overlap, the harm experienced is considerably amplified.

The nature of environmental ASB was predominantly waste and rubbish related, followed by dog fouling and graffiti. Little information is available from local data on the characteristics of perpetrators of environmental ASB. Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service provide a number of initiatives to remove waste from locations as well as providing prevention programs to reduce the risk of fire.

In national surveys alcohol is identified as a prominent factor in ASB, and in Lancashire the approximate frequency of alcohol involvement is 19%. The role of alcohol *in isolation* as a causal factor is however not clear, with research identifying important cultural, societal and personal factors playing a part in how alcohol may link to ASB.

Developmentally, conduct disorder has been identified as a common mental health condition in children and young people that may be a causal factor in ASB, however the interaction between genes and environment is crucial – a child with a strong genetic predisposition to conduct disorder may not show problems unless the environment is poor. Similarly, even a poor environment may not have a bad effect without the genetic predisposition.

Mental health issues are often on a spectrum rather than absolute, and they are also often not static in their impact and severity. For example, ASB can be triggered in adults when an individual encounters difficulties in adapting to life changes, often because they lack psychological, social or economic resilience to withstand the negative effects associated with such experiences.

In Lancashire, Community Safety Partnerships treat ASB as a key priority and multi-agency tactical tasking provides a partnership approach to dealing with ASB. Neighbourhood teams play the pivotal role in tackling ASB; however Early Action Teams are responsible for organising and administering ASB Risk Assessment Conferences. Response to ASB has seen a shift from enforcement to early action interventions such as Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Restorative Justice.

Likewise, registered housing providers who have enforcement powers to deal with ASB where appropriate provide non-enforcement activities such as floating support and mediation services. Environmental ASB is tackled in the main by Councils who also manage parks and diversionary

activities to support young people, as well as assisting with alcohol related ASB issues using outreach workers and youth events.

Other partners and organisations provide a plethora of support services to deal with the factors that can cause ASB or are a result of ASB. Fire and Rescue, schools, councils, health authorities, Youth Offending Teams, substance misuse organisations and mediation services to name but a few help in educating, and supporting individuals and groups to overcome their problems. ASB Risk Assessment Conferences are used as the conduit to signpost and oversee progress of support for victims of ASB. Although Lancashire has mature systems and processes for tackling ASB, much work is continuing to improve the service to the residents of Lancashire. Work is on-going to refresh minimum standards, provide adequate training and effect the new legislation expected to be in force in October 2014.

Recommendations

1. ASB Steering Group to summarise the key powers to ensure that the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (commencing October 2014) are practised consistently throughout Lancashire., It is recommended that the ASB partnership group provide a summary of key tools and powers for all Local Authorities and partners of Lancashire.
2. In addition to the key tools and powers; provide a consistent approach across pan-Lancashire for the community trigger for ASB.
3. Independent mediation has been evidenced as good practice when managing incidents of neighbour problems and noise nuisance; at present there are two services in Lancashire. It is recommended that using independent mediation services is given due consideration by all local authorities, housing providers and other partners when managing neighbour disputes and noise nuisance.
4. Training and empowering Police Officers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices when attending noise ASB incidents to deal with the situation more effectively, especially where all other avenues have been attempted. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 will provide the police directly with this power. Where practical it is recommended that Local Authorities consider working in partnership with the police to deal with noise ASB issues in this way.
5. Evidence identifies that the top ASB issues are noise; malicious communication, together with threats and verbal abuse; deliberate nuisance with behaviours such as throwing missiles or door and window knocking; and waste such as littering and fly-tipping. It is recommended that these issues are flagged across pan- Lancashire and prioritise them in proportion to risk of harm for all Local Authorities.
6. Analysis has shown that individuals who have a high fear of crime are more likely to be repeat victims and considered vulnerable. Furthermore, evidence from the ASB CSIA has shown that a high percentage of ASB are repeat recurring related incidents. It is

recommended that Partners flag repeat incidents and use them as an indicator for potential risk and identify as vulnerable people and locations.

7. Evidence has demonstrated that young people with Conduct Disorder commit high levels of ASB and are more likely to suffer from alcohol abuse in later life. ASB perpetrators identified as suffering symptoms of Conduct Disorder should be directed into appropriate health and alcohol services.
8. Following on from the previous recommendation, an alcohol harm strategy should include provision for young people with Conduct Disorder.
9. Where a positive outcome has not been identified during an ASBRAC process, a consistent pan-Lancashire escalation process should be introduced and rolled out.
10. There is a correlation between ASB and deliberate secondary fires; it is recommended that Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service continue to support the ASB strategies by increasing prevention programs, awareness of fire setting and the harm caused by perpetrators.
11. Currently there are no records kept of Anti-social Behaviour perpetrators. It is recommended that a process is set up to establish how to identify those people and record them as such for the top ASB issues and those people involved in ASBRACs with the purpose to reduce future continued behaviour.