

## **Anti-Social Behaviour**

Anti-social behaviour is an activity that impacts on other people in a negative way. Despite a 39% drop in the incidence of crime since 1995, anti-social behaviour remains a serious issue with around 66,000 reports of ASB made to authorities each day (Source: One day count of anti-social behaviour: September 10 2003).

What is Anti-social behavior (ASB)?

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) includes a variety of behaviour covering a whole complex of selfish and unacceptable activity that can blight the quality of community life. Examples include:

- nuisance neighbours
- rowdy and nuisance behaviour
- yobbish behaviour and intimidating groups taking over public spaces
- vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
- people dealing and buying drugs on the street
- people dumping rubbish and abandoning cars
- begging and anti-social drinking
- the misuse of fireworks

Anti-social behaviour doesn't just make life unpleasant. It holds back the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and creates an environment where more serious crime can take hold.

On any measure of polling or survey, anti-social behaviour matters - it has a negative effect on far too many people's quality of life.

### **Why does anti-social behaviour happen?**

Many factors have been identified that, while they do not cause anti-social behaviour, do increase the risk of it happening. Four main areas have been identified (Source: Home Office, Research Development & Statistics, ASB - A collection of published evidence, 2004):

#### **Family environment**

Risk factors include:

- poor parental discipline and supervision
- family conflict (between parents or between parents and children)
- family history of problem behaviour
- parental involvement/attitudes condoning problem behaviour

## **Schooling & educational attainment**

Risk factors include:

- aggressive behaviour (e.g. bullying)
- lack of commitment to school
- school disorganisation
- school exclusion and truancy patterns
- low achievement at school

## **Community life / accommodation / employment**

Risk factors include:

- community disorganisation and neglect
- the availability of drugs and alcohol
- lack of neighbourhood attachment
- growing up in a deprived area within low income families, high rates of unemployment and a high turnover of population
- areas where there are high levels of vandalism

## **Personal and individual factors**

Risk factors include:

- alienation and lack of social commitment
- early involvement in problem behaviour
- attitudes that condone problem behaviour
- for young people, a high proportion of unsupervised time spent with peers and friends or peers involved in problem behaviour
- mental illness
- early involvement in the use of illegal drugs and crime

The Home Office is committed to a range of supportive interventions which can engage individuals in changing their own behaviour and help them to tackle some of the underlying problems. Some of these include:

### **Individual Support Orders (ISOs)**

ISOs are court orders for 10-17 year olds which impose positive conditions designed to tackle the underlying causes of a young person's anti-social behaviour. There has been a recent increase in the amount of funding available in 2005/06 to the Youth Justice Board (YJB) to fund Individual Support Orders (ISOs).

### **Agreements and contracts**

This covers a range of formal non-legal agreements, contracts and warnings. Examples include acceptable behaviour contracts or agreements (ABCs or

ABAs), ensuring tenancy agreements cover ASB issues and parenting contracts..They are all aimed at nipping problems in the bud.

### **Youth specific interventions**

Youth Inclusion Programmes (YIP) involve young people aged between 13 - 16 years who have been identified as being engaged in crime or identified as being the most at risk of offending, truancy, or social exclusion.

### **Interventions**

Anti-social behaviour causes harm to individuals and the community and must be stopped at the earliest opportunity, when the minimum harm has been caused.

Early interventions, eg, early warnings, visits and letters are very important in preventing an escalation of problems.

The goal of any intervention is to:

- first and most immediately protect victims, witnesses and the community
- enable the perpetrator to recognise the consequences of their behaviour
- make sure the perpetrator changes their behaviour

Measures that can be used by the police and other agencies include:

- warning letters and interviews, contracts and agreements
- fixed penalty notices and penalty notices for disorder
- parenting orders, Individual Support orders, Noise Abatement Notices, Injunctions, dispersal powers and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)
- 'crack house' closure orders
- possession proceedings against a tenant

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If you experience anti-social behaviour contact your local police or your (Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator) at your local council, the details of which can be found at <http://www.together.gov.uk>