

Anti-Social Behaviour

Driver – Political, Social, Legal

Related Drivers – Neighbourhood Policing, Mental Health, Public Perceptions of Crime, Public Perceptions of the Police, Youth Crime, CCTV, Victims and Witnesses

Political Context

The recent drive towards neighbourhood policing has teams focusing on combating local priorities and issues of which, anti-social behaviour is generally top of the list. Reforms introduced by the Government through the Policing Green Paper¹ and various reviews^{2,3,4} have introduced the **Policing Pledge** and the introduction of **one overall public confidence target** in relation to anti-social behaviour (ASB).

In March 2009, the Home Office has moved to a single target for forces which focuses every force on whether they have the public's confidence that they are identifying and addressing the crime and ASB issues that matter most to their communities.^{1,5,6} The target is that by 2012, 60 percent of people will be confident that the police, and local council, are dealing with their concerns at a local level.⁷ The Home Office released figures showing that the public's confidence levels in the police currently vary across the country, with the latest national average showed 46% were happy with the police. Police forces and authorities have also been set a level of confidence that they should reach by March 2011. Both this, and their 2012 target, will be measured by the British Crime Survey.⁸ Effective neighbourhood policing, and most importantly tackling anti-social behaviour will enable police forces to meet this target.

Additionally the Green Paper introduced the roll-out of the Policing Pledge which sets out the police's commitment to meeting local priorities which generally includes tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour. It is important to note that each pledge is tailored to each community therefore the focus on ASB will vary from community to community. Additionally the pledge commits the police to sharing information, in particular ASB related criminal activity, through crime maps and sharing information on what happened to people brought to justice.

An Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) review of the Policing Pledge recommended a number of improvements to the service's work with the Pledge including:

- More work on communicating the Pledge to the public
- A better system to handle public dissatisfaction with police services in local areas
- Assessing and assuring the amount of visibility time that policing teams spend in neighbourhoods.⁹

Cutting Crime: Two years on, introduces the creation of the **community prosecutors approach**. They will work with neighbourhood policing teams to better understand local crime concerns, and inform their prosecution decisions. In addition, the Community Crime

Fighter programme has trained 1,200 people, with plans to train a total of 3,600 by the end of 2009. This training targets people who are active in their community, and equips them with the knowledge and confidence to work with their crime and justice agencies.¹⁰

In the speech “Anti-Social Behaviour: We’re Not Having It”, in May 2008 the then Home Secretary, Jacqui Smith, announced a range of measures to deal with anti-social behaviour. She called for the focus to be moved from Anti-Social Behaviour Order’s (ASBO’s) to the use of early intervention measures to prevent anti-social behaviour earlier on. Measures outlined include:

- Improved joined up working between statutory agencies and local authorities to expose wider criminal behaviour of persistent anti-social behaviour offenders
- More action to combat poor parenting. Courts in England & Wales would be required to consider making a Parenting Order when giving ASBO’s to 10 to 17 year olds
- Police officers, anti-social behaviour coordinators and housing officers to use all of the tools at their disposal to stop low level violence and street thuggery
- Anti-social behaviour practitioners in every area will be given guidance about the range of tools available and how best to use them.¹¹

Community Success Against Anti-Social Behaviour in Newham¹²

In answer to the growing ASB problem residents of Snowhill estate in Newham, along with Newham Homes, the local Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), the Youth Offending Team and the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Investigations and Enforcement Team came together to take the following action:

- Extensive environment improvement work carried out along with CCTV installed on the Snowhill estate
- Youth Outreach and youth activities offered to young people on the estate
- Community kept informed of progress through local newsletters and meetings
- Regular patrols conducted by the local police to deal with loitering youths
- The community was encouraged to get involved and assist the authorities in taking action against ASB
- Support offered to victims and witnesses who have agreed to attend court
- The Council and the SNT obtained nine ASBOs in 2007 and a further four in 2008 against the youths responsible for anti-social behaviour.

Since this action has been taken, there has been a dramatic fall in the number of calls to Newham Council's anti-social behaviour hotline — between January and April 2009 there have been 10 calls relating to anti-social behaviour on the four roads bordering the Snowhill Estate compared to 24 over the same period last year.

This work has also helped contribute to an overall fall in crime in Newham with latest figures showing a 12.6% drop in the last six years with 25,748 offences recorded in 2003-04 and 22,758 in 2007-08.

Social Context

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) remains an issue where one in six (16%) people had a high level of perceived anti-social behaviour according to the British Crime Survey (BCS) 2007-08.¹³ This is a decrease from 18 per cent in 2006/07 but the recent fall in the last year brings the level back to that of 2003/04.

Anecdotal evidence presented in the Home Affairs Committee Report, *Policing in the 21st Century*, suggests that people are unhappy that the police do not take action against criminal damage, anti-social behaviour, and harassment; and they are frustrated that they often do not receive a response from the police once they have reported a crime.¹⁴ In one case reported in the national press, a couple who dialled 999 to report a burglary at a neighbour's home in Cambridge received a text message from a police officer an hour later asking them to investigate the matter themselves, as officers were too busy to attend the crime.¹⁵

This anecdotal evidence is supported by the results of the British Crime Survey for 2007/08. Only 43% of people thought the police could be relied on to deal with minor crimes, 48% believed they would be there when needed and 51% thought the police were dealing with issues that matter to the local community. Only 41% of those who had been both a victim and a witness rated the local police as doing a good or excellent job compared with 57% of those who had not experienced crime.¹³

Both the Police Federation and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) share concern about the impact of increasing number of complaints about the police on public consent for policing. The IPCC recorded 28,998 complaint cases during the year 2006/07, an increase of 10% on the previous year. 45% of complaints were allegations of neglect/failure of duty and incivility. While the number of individuals who complained in 2007/08 remained constant at 28,963, the number of overall allegations rose by 5% to 48,280 (or 1.7 per individual).¹⁶

Legal Context

In addition to these, the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008¹⁷ extends crack house closure order powers to cover more serious types of anti-social behaviour. The Act also includes a statutory requirement to review ASBO's on all under 18 year olds after one year to ensure that they are working and to pave the way for other interventions, if necessary.

Potential Skills Needs

Charging skills – using the variety of anti-social behaviour related powers and tools

Communication skills – effective communication between local partners and communities

Community policing skills – to discuss and set local priorities and encourage more people to become involved in crime reduction alongside operational policing tasks

Customer care skills – delivering a consistent high quality service

Information sharing skills – to provide effective information to partner agencies

Inter-agency working skills – to work effectively with two or more government agencies

Media management skills – to sell the success in tackling crime, especially anti-social behaviour, to the community

Multi-agency working skills – to work with other agencies to combat anti-social behaviour

Partnership working skills – to work effectively with other agencies to a common goal and standards

Relationship building skills – to engage with the community and young people and maintain public confidence

¹ [Home Office \(2008\) *From the Neighbourhood to the national: Policing our communities together*. Cm 7448, London: The Stationery Office Ltd.](#)

² [Local Government Association \(2008\) *Answering to you: Policing in the 21st century*. London: Local Government Association.](#)

³ [Casey, Louise \(2008\) *Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime: A review by Louise Casey*. London: Cabinet Office.](#)

⁴ [Flanagan, Sir Ronnie \(2008\) *The Review of Policing: Final Report*. London: Home Office.](#)

⁵ [Home Secretary Statement, 8 December 2008, 'Home Secretary's Strategic Policing Priorities for 2009-2010'.](#)

⁶ [Home Office \(2008\) *From the Neighbourhood to the National: Policing our communities together – Summary of Green Paper consultation responses and next steps*. London: Home Office.](#)

⁷ [Home Office \(March 2009\) Policing Policy e-Bulletin, Issue124.](#)

⁸ [Home Office \(2009\) *New single confidence target for police: Table of force level targets for 2011 and 2012*.](#)

⁹ [HMIC \(2009\) *Delivering the Policing Pledge: Early Findings*. London: Home Office.](#)

¹⁰ [Home Office \(2009\) *Cutting Crime Two Years On: An updated to the 2008-2011 Crime Strategy*. London: HM Government.](#)

¹¹ [Home Secretary Jacquie Smith, 8 May 2008, 'Anti-social behaviour: We're not having it speech'.](#)

¹² [Home Office Press Release, 21 April 2009, 'Community success against anti-social behaviour in Newham'.](#)

¹³ [Home Office \(2008\) *Chapter 5 Public Perceptions from 2007/08 British Crime Survey*. London: Home Office.](#)

¹⁴ [House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee \(2008\) *Policing in the 21st Century*. Seventh Report of the 2007-08 Session. HC 364-I, London: The Stationery Office Ltd.](#)

¹⁵ Daily Express, 28 August 2008, '*We dialled 999...and police texted us to investigate the raid*', p 9.

¹⁶ Independent Police Complaints Commission (2008) *Police Complaints: Statistics for England and Wales 2007/08*. London: IPCC.

¹⁷ [Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 \(UK\)](#).