Innovative Practice in Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour: Guidance for members of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships
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Judy Nixon, Sarah Blandy, Caroline Hunter, Kesia Reeve, Sheffield Hallam University Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research Anwen Jone/Centre for Housing Policy York

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
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Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU
Telephone: 020 7944 3000
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Innovative Practice in Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour: Guidance for members of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

Since the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) have taken on responsibility for co-ordinating action to deal with anti-social behaviour, and the wider issue of community safety. Dealing effectively with youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour however, has proved to be very difficult. Practitioners report that unless enforcement action against tenants of social landlords is combined with measures to address the underlying cause of anti-social behaviour there is a danger that the problem is simply displaced from the social sector to the private housing sectors where it is more difficult to intervene to stop the nuisance behaviours.

In October 2001, the Centre for Regional and Social Research (CRESR) at Sheffield Hallam University and the Centre for Housing Policy (CHP) at the University of York were commissioned by the ODPM to examine the development of preventative, enforcement and resettlement initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour in areas which include private as well as social housing. Based on the research findings the following guide outlines the problems that practitioners reported in developing effective interventions and suggests how improvements could be made to the management of anti-social behaviour.

Purpose of the Guide

Tackling anti-social behaviour has been identified as a priority issue by the majority of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and a diverse range of different initiatives have been developed to deal with this complex problem. The most effective interventions involve a wide range of local agencies including, the police, social landlords, (both local authority landlords and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)) neighbourhood wardens, youth offending teams, schools, health workers, social workers, community development workers and probation officers. In addition many initiatives also draw on the skill and expertise of community based organisations such as mediation schemes, drug and alcohol support services, mental health projects, and perhaps most importantly tenants and residents groups. The aim of this guide is to provide agencies working with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships with a summary of the key issues involved in developing effective interventions to tackle anti-social behaviour. More specifically the guide provides practitioners with information on:
Innovative Practice in Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour:

- Developing strategies to map the nature of the problem as it occurs in private rented and owner occupied areas as well as in areas of social housing.
- Overcoming barriers to information sharing amongst partner agencies.
- Methods of building community confidence and the development of initiatives to address the underlying causes of the problem.
- Developing successful multi agency partnerships including working with private landlords.
- Devising effective interventions including the use of prevention, enforcement and resettlement initiatives.

The Guide is not a detailed blueprint for tackling anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance; rather it provides a framework to help Partnerships develop policies, processes and procedures that reflect local circumstances.

**A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION**

As public concern over the damaging effects of anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance has increased, a variety of innovative schemes and projects have been developed to address these complex and dynamic problems. Analysis of interventions shows that the most effective share the following core elements:

- **Understanding of the nature of the problem**, with a range of agencies working together to share knowledge about the specific nature of anti-social behaviour in their area. Tools that can be used to increase agencies’ understanding of the problems affecting particular neighbourhoods include development of a multi-agency data base to map incidents, audits, surveys, focus groups and risk assessments of individual perpetrators to identify the underlying causes of anti-social behaviour (see pages 3-7).

- **The engagement of residents and building community confidence** that action will be taken if complaints are made. A variety of ways to involve residents can be used, from simple surveys and public meetings through to the establishment of local partnerships with community development support, to empower residents to set their own priorities for action (see pages 7-12).

- **Established multi-agency partnerships** are more likely than recently formed partnerships to have developed high degrees of trust and openness between members resulting in clear communication and excellent information sharing protocols. Such partnerships find it easier to overcome barriers to joint working and to develop methods of engaging residents and others in devising and implementing effective strategic and operational responses (see pages 12-16).

- **Effective interventions** are based on a balanced strategy, which provides a mixture of prevention, enforcement and support (see pages 16-24).
Figure 1 below indicates the way in which these elements interrelated to inform the development of successful strategic and operational responses.

By considering examples of innovative practice in relation to each of the core elements of successful anti-social behaviour interventions it is hoped that the Guide will be of value in helping members of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships to work together more effectively to deal with all aspects of youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour as it occurs in both public and private housing areas.

Developing a shared understanding of the specific nature of the problem

**DEFINING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

Although ‘disorder’, ‘youth nuisance’ and ‘anti-social behaviour’ are frequently identified as priority themes in Crime and Disorder strategies there is often a lack of clarity and sometimes a lack of consensus, amongst different members of the Partnership as to what behaviours are being referred to. Indeed the terms 'crime', 'disorder', and 'anti-social behaviour' are frequently used interchangeably to refer to a whole range of activity from low level nuisance to criminal behaviour. Any behaviour can be anti-social depending on a number of factors including; the context in which it takes place, the location, the tolerance levels of the local community, and expectations about the quality of life in the area.
The approach adopted in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 in which anti-social behaviour is defined in terms of 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’ provides a useful benchmark for the development of a shared understanding of the problem. Some practitioners felt it was sufficient to adopt a broad common sense approach to understanding anti-social behaviour and as one officer explained:

In some ways not categorising it [anti-social behaviour] is …helpful. It is about us being able to deal with complaints from the community about those things that adversely impact on their quality of life and which a normal, reasonable person says is unacceptable behaviour.

However, practitioners were also aware that such a broad approach could give rise to problems with different agencies adopting different interpretations of behaviour and different working definitions of the problem. It was agreed that whatever approach was adopted what was important was for CDRPs members to develop a shared understanding of the specific nature of the problem to be addressed taking into account the following factors:

• The key determinants in deciding whether particular behaviour is anti-social or not should be the impact of behaviour on others and the perceptions of local residents;

• Context and locations are all important, what is anti-social in one location will not necessarily be considered anti-social in another;

• Every area is different – residents know how serious the problems in their area are and therefore should be centrally involved in determining priorities for action;

• There is a danger that adopting a simple definition of anti-social behaviour can result in a process of negative stereotyping which can serve to scapegoat disadvantaged communities;

• If too narrow a working definition of the problem is employed there is a tendency for agencies to abrogate responsibility for taking action.

An example of a working definition which reflects the importance of the effect of behaviours on individuals and communities has been developed by the Youth Offending Team in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (see below):

A practical example of a shared definition
The following working definition was devised by members of the Youth Offending Team in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea:

‘Behaviour causing disturbance, distress, harm or fear which has a significant effect on people’s lifestyles and routines. Persistence, intensity and the numbers involved are relevant factors. The behaviour need not be a breach of the criminal law’.

What is important about this definition is that it does not specify particular behaviours but takes into account the different perspectives of all the member agencies while at the same time.

For more details about this initiative contact: Brendan O’Keefe, Youth Offending Team, 36c Oxford Gardens, London W10 5UQ Telephone: 020 7598 4700
MONITORING AND RECORDING THE EXTENT AND NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Collecting data to accurately map the incidence and extent of anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance is problematic for a number of reasons. Most CDRPs have not yet developed centralised, co-ordinated data collection systems. Typically, information is gathered from a wide range of separate data sets, derived from different types of systems, which collect different types of information. Even where information sharing protocols have been put in place developing an overview of the changing nature of the problem can be hampered by incompatible recording and monitoring systems and more general concerns about data protection. Agencies reported using a number of different strategies to overcome obstacles to sharing information about anti-social behaviour (see below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers to sharing information</th>
<th>Strategies to improve information sharing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Different agencies adopt different definitions of the problem;</td>
<td>• Clarification and discussion of the range of interpretations of anti-social behaviour and development of an agreed working definition;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Concerns over Data Protection issues;</td>
<td>• Networking with other Partnerships to establish methods of sharing information and the development of local information sharing protocols;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Data collection problems caused by incompatible IT systems and the lack of coterminous boundaries between agencies;</td>
<td>• Provision of clearer guidance and training on Data Protection issues to all partner members;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Joint working between key agencies to minimise IT problems;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of dedicated surveys and alternative data sources to establish a base line against which crime statistics and other trends can be compared over time. This method of monitoring is particularly valuable since it facilitates an assessment of trends and an evaluation of long-term outcomes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

More detailed examples of innovative practice in mapping anti-social behaviour are outlined below:

- **Development of a GIS mapping system and a dedicated crime and disorder data base** In the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Community Safety Team is in the process of developing two centralised IT systems; a GIS system to map crime and anti-social behaviour hot spots and a database to monitor the action taken to meet the objectives of the Crime and Disorder Strategy.
Innovative Practice in Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour:

For more details about these initiatives contact: Jamie Cudden, GIS Analyst for Crime and Disorder Tel: (020) 8246 0893, or Martin Gormlie, Analyst, Tel: (020) 7795 6660, Community Safety Team, The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Whitlock House c/o Kensington Police Station, 72-74 Earls Court Road, London W8 6EQ

• Use of feasibility studies and surveys

In developing a dedicated anti-social behaviour resettlement service to families and individuals who have been evicted or who are under threat of homelessness as a result of anti-social behaviour, Bolton undertook an in-depth feasibility study based on the following sources of data:

– Collection of information about known perpetrators and vulnerable families from key agencies such as social landlords, social services, education services, YOTs and youth workers;

– Mapping the existing range and cost of operation services being provided to such families;

– Resource mapping of relevant strategic planning systems and structures;

– Interviews with families who have a history of anti-social behaviour.

The results of the feasibility study have been used to reach agreement on what services should be provided and by whom, which agency or agencies should manage the project, the optimum size and structure and location of the project, staffing levels and capital and revenue funding of the project.

For more details about this initiative contact: Gillian Hughes, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, Chief Executives Dep. Bolton Town Hall. Bolton. Tel: 01204 331226

• Evaluation of initiatives

The collection of detailed data at the start of a project can also be useful for evaluation purposes. For example, at the start of the East Manchester Neighbour Nuisance Project the team carried out a resident’s survey which provided baseline data against which crime statistics and data from further resident’s surveys has been compared. The collection of this data has enabled the team to assess the impact of particular interventions, and to judge whether the fear of crime, as well as actual recorded crime, has decreased.

For more details about this initiative contact: Graham Curel, Team Leader, East Manchester Neighbour Nuisance Team, Tel: 0161 230 2100, Email: g.curel@notes.manchester.gov.uk

• Use of ‘quality of life indicators’ and social data as well as crime data
In Honeywell Gardens in Gedling the impact of interventions is monitored using a wide range of different indicators including:

- Crime statistics, both reported incidents and actual crimes;
- House prices;
- Feedback from local shopkeepers and businesses;
- Turnout at residents meetings;
- Contact between residents and council officers.

For more details about this initiative contact: David Jayne Crime Reduction Officer
Telephone 0115 901 3805 Email: David.jayne@gedling.gov.uk

Engaging residents in anti-social behaviour initiatives

Agencies involved in dealing with anti-social behaviour in areas containing owner-occupied or private rented housing stressed the importance of engaging with residents. In such areas the sanctions that can be brought to bear to stop low level but persistent anti-social behaviour are more limited than those that can be used to deal with anti-social behaviour amongst social housing tenants. Details of the range of sanctions that can be used are outlined below:
While in theory, the sanctions outlined above can be brought to bear to stop owner occupiers and private tenants from behaving in an anti-social manner in practice, agencies reported that it was difficult to co-ordinate action, collect evidence and persuade neighbours to act as witnesses. Thus in residential areas containing private housing rather than focussing on the use of enforcement action practitioners emphasised the importance of working closely with residents to build community capacity and develop local solutions.

In three of the case study areas, strategies had been developed specifically focusing on methods of engaging and working with residents. In these areas respondents reported that anti-social behaviour was symptomatic of long term problems with the area which were not susceptible to quick fixes. While the approach adopted in each area was very different, there were a number of common features to all the initiatives.
The Honeywood Garden project in Gedling and the CASPAR projects in Northampton are illustrative of the important role that residents can play in identifying priority issues and developing effective interventions (see below):

**Honeywood Gardens, Gedling**, is a high density 1960’s private housing estate of 800 mainly owner-occupied dwellings. The estate lies mostly within Gedling Borough council area, partly within the boundary of Nottingham City Council, and Nottinghamshire County Council also has some responsibilities, including education and social services, for the area. Although primarily owner-occupied, various social and private landlords own some houses on the estate in a complex pattern of ownership. By 2000, house prices on the estate were falling, graffiti, vandalism and fly tipping were clearly a problem, and some shops in the small precinct had failed. The garage areas had become a dumping ground for burnt-out cars, and were areas where youths congregated. Burglary of dwellings was much higher on the estate (16% of all recorded crimes) than in the borough as a whole (7%). The layout of the estate made it difficult to police; it was described by police as a ‘Crime by Design’ neighbourhood. Despite these problems few formal complaints had been received because residents had lost faith in the authorities.

The estate was identified as a ‘hot spot’ through the regular meetings between the local authority environmental protection manager and the local police. In July 2001 a Working Group was set up, which initially involved the police, local authority officers and a local resident. More agencies were included as time went on and the following interventions were implemented:

- **‘Quick wins’** – Street cleansing frequencies and quicker removal of abandoned vehicles were agreed as initial steps.
- **Community development** – workers from the county council and a voluntary agency knocked on doors and found out the concerns of residents. This revealed for the first time that the BME population of Honeywood Gardens is approximately 40-50% (1.5% in the borough as a whole). Community worker involvement has continued throughout.
Innovative Practice in Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour:

**The Blackthorn Crime and Anti-social Behaviour Project (CASPAR)**

Blackthorn is a mixed tenure estate of 2,200 houses located on the outskirts of Northampton. Crime data revealed the estate to have a significant crime problem, particularly in relation to burglary and vehicle crime. In response to this problem the Police and the Borough and the County established a neighbourhood project. The project management Board consisted of representatives from the LA and the police (Head of Performance Management), the Community Safety Manager, the district Housing Manager; the Police Sector Commander; the Police Community Safety Inspector; and representatives from the county council and from private landlords operating in the area.

**Aims of the Blackthorn Project were to:**

1. To make Blackthorn a safer place in which to live, work and visit
2. To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Blackthorn without incurring displacement to surrounding areas

**Neighbourhood Watch** – 60 people, of whom the large majority was black, attended the first meeting followed by an evening workshop, which identified residents’ main concerns about crime.

**Information and feedback** – a high quality Honeywood Gardens Newsletter is produced regularly by Gedling BC Communications Officer, with input from the local beat manager.

**High visibility police operation** – for a limited period, a focus on crime around the shops (identified as a major concern for residents) led to some arrests as well as higher awareness amongst young people and their parents about the consequences of anti-social and criminal behaviour.

**Public meeting** – widely publicised, held in January 2002, attended by about 80 members of the community following intensive work by the community development workers. Discussed the main concerns of the residents:

- Environmental state of the area
- Garage areas
- Youth issues
- Crime
- Community involvement

**Environmental improvements** – clearance of overgrown paths and boarding up abandoned garages.

**Residents’ meetings** – continued regularly, leading to the formation of a residents’ association committee with elected officers, advice and assistance provided by the local Council for Voluntary Services. These and Neighbourhood Watch meetings are serviced by Gedling BC; one officer attends to provide a contact point for residents.

**Media strategy** – successes are reported in the local press and radio; Gedling BC Communications Officer co-ordinates contact with the media.

**Progress made over the last two years:**

Turnout at residents’ meetings continues to be high. Their association sets priorities for spending on the estate, in partnership with the authorities. Residents report that the estate ‘feels’ safer and more friendly, and crime statistics confirm this, despite increased reporting. Residents take more ownership of their environment, contributing to clear-up efforts. Residents have been educated on how each agency works, so less time is wasted and expectations match the ability to respond.

For more details about this initiative contact: David Jayne Crime Reduction Officer Telephone 0115 901 3805 Email David.jayne@gedling.gov.uk
3. To co-ordinate joint working by all agencies in enforcement, support and co-operation more effectively

4. To fully involve the community in sustained crime and disorder reduction solutions

At the start of the project, a community survey was carried out to identify residents’ concerns and to agree a programme of work which included the following elements:

**Litter** – a range of interventions including a clean up campaign, provision of skips and sharps boxes, the provision of cameras to residents to enable them to photograph areas of concern, school competitions etc.

**Abandoned vehicles** – a new policy for dealing with vehicles was introduced that increased the rate of removal by 300% combined with the use of injunctions to prevent ‘back street’ car breakers stripping cars on the estate.

**Physical layout of the estate** – in the community survey respondents were asked to identify areas they felt unsafe and meetings took place with relevant agencies and residents to agree a response. Consideration was given to a range of measures including: traffic calming, new footpaths, closure of underpasses, motor/cycle barriers, lighting enhancement and tree pruning and removal.

**Problem with young people ‘hanging around’** – the physical layout of the shopping area, where youths congregate, was addressed in liaison with shop owners and businesses.

**Lack of provision for young people** – successful bids were made for grants for a youth club and training for local young people to become youth leaders. The Prince’s Trust Volunteers were invited to run a project from the Community Centre.

**Crime** – a Home Office award of £72,000 was made for a Neighbourhood Warden scheme to be developed.

**Targeted Information disclosure** – meetings between housing officers and community beat officers were held to identify offenders, this type of exchange of information resulted in three evictions.

**Community involvement and the activities of statutory agencies** – Blackthorn Workers Forum comprising of front line workers from local agencies and representatives from the residents association and local schools was established. The aim of the forum was to develop effective partnership working.

**A designated press officer** was appointed to ensure a regular supply of positive publicity about the estate.

The project has been successful in cutting the crime rate by two thirds over a three-year period and in November 2002 the Blackthorn project won first prize in the Government Urban Renaissance Awards.

For more details about this initiative contact: Sergeant Mark McDonnell, Campbell Square Police Station Upper Mounts, Northampton NN1 3EL. Telephone 01604 700 700. Email: mark.mcdonnell@northants.pnn.police.uk

A wide range of benefits can result from developing resident-led initiatives and agencies with experience of working with local communities to tackle issues of crime reduction and anti-social behaviour were very positive about the long-term impact and cost benefits of such work. It is clear however, that there are barriers that need to be overcome before residents will become involved in anti-social behaviour strategies. Community empowerment partnerships can find it difficult to reach a consensus on targets with other agencies, which have traditionally worked to a different agenda than reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. However, CDRPs that were committed to resident-led initiatives
Innovative Practice in Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour: reported a high success rate, with residents taking on responsibility for their neighbourhood and working in partnership with statutory agencies to set priorities for spending. Both the potential barriers to community empowerment and possible ways of overcoming them are outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers to community empowerment</th>
<th>Ways of overcoming the barriers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Failure to build on initial enthusiasm by residents;</td>
<td>• Be seen to be doing something but be aware that ‘quick wins’ could merely displace the problem;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unrealistic expectations by residents about what action can be taken and how quickly, by which agencies;</td>
<td>• Educate residents about local authority and police functions, and establish one contact point for residents;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of confidence by residents in their ability to take on responsibilities;</td>
<td>• Provide tailored support for residents association, e.g. taking and distributing minutes, training in chairing skills;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Residents become discouraged by slow rate of progress towards goals.</td>
<td>• Ensure that encouragement and feedback to residents continues, backed up by media strategy to publicise success.</td>
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### Multi-agency partnerships

A range of different models of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are being developed. Partnerships are established at different levels for different purposes – some are borough wide, while others are specific to implementing local schemes or to co-ordinate interventions to deal with individual perpetrators. In the study the following three distinct models of partnership working were identified:

- **Strategic partnerships** usually operating at the borough level with the membership comprising of senior representatives from the main statutory agencies including the Police Authority, the Local Authority including representatives from housing, social services, education, and the Probation Service and Health Service. The main function of these partnerships was to agree strategic priorities to promote community safety and in all of the case study areas, dedicated Community Safety or Crime Reduction Officers/Teams serviced the partnership. Generally, respondents across the case studies felt that these formal strategic partnerships worked best if the representatives had a high degree of seniority within their organisation and therefore had the authority to take action.

- **Operational partnerships** operating at a neighbourhood level or focussing on specific issues of concern. The case studies included a diverse range of neighbourhood or issue based partnerships, many of which had been recently set up but which had strong links to established statutory agencies. Examples of well-developed operational partnerships suggests that building trust and confidence between the partner agencies is central to the success of anti-social behaviour initiatives. But such work is resource intensive both in terms of officer time and in terms of funding for specific initiatives.
• **Partnerships to co-ordinate interventions to deal with individual perpetrators.** Much of the work of the different working parties, projects and groups set up in the case study areas was concerned with identifying and targeting individuals, who were involved in anti-social behaviour. A variety of different multi-agency models were being used to deal with individual cases; including case conferencing, ASBO/ABC panels and task forces.

In practice although some successful operational initiatives had been developed in relative isolation from the wider Crime and Disorder provisions, the most effective strategic and operational interventions occurred when all three levels of partnership working were co-ordinated and connected with clear lines of communication and accountability. Examples of well-developed partnerships, suggests that development of trust and confidence between different agencies takes time and requires agencies to prioritise resources.

### Features of successful partnerships

- Clear structures which facilitate communication both across different agencies and within the partnership i.e. both within agencies and across agencies and officers operating at different levels;
- Mature, well-established partnerships were more likely than recently formed partnerships to have developed high degrees of trust and openness between members resulting in clear communication and excellent information sharing protocols;
- Involvement and commitment from senior staff with sufficient authority to implement decisions taken by the partnerships;
- The ability to deal with conflict;
- Carefully planned strategic and operational responses based on reliable information about the nature of the problem combined with analysis of alternative forms of interventions and the associated resource requirements;
- Monitoring and evaluation of interventions combined with clear lines of accountability;
- Willingness to regularly review and change structures in response to the changing nature of the problem.

Many newly formed Partnerships were struggling to develop relationships of trust. In these areas, multi agency working was hampered by poor co-ordination of initiatives, lack of structural support, weak leadership and lack of direction from the strategic body within the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. Respondents were however, aware of the need to overcome the frustrations that can arise when agencies with different priorities and agendas are brought together. Methods used to overcome such problems included:

### Methods to overcome problems with partnership working

- Development of clear lines of communication between all agencies and residents;
- A commitment from both individuals and agencies to ensure continuity of membership of the partnership and the development of clear hand-over arrangements when personnel do change;
- The provision of clear and agreed information sharing protocols and data exchange mechanisms;
- The use of conflict resolution mechanisms, including referring matters to a strategic umbrella body such as the steering group of the Crime and Disorder Partnership.
WORKING WITH PRIVATE LANDLORDS

To date, enforcement action taken by members of CDRPs has tended to focus on action against tenants or children of tenants living in social rented accommodation. It is recognised that anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance are problems which can occur in any neighbourhood regardless of the form of ownership, but unless there is an explicit commitment to tackle anti-social behaviour on a cross tenure basis, there is a tendency for action to focus on areas of local authority housing.

In practice, it appears that the need for Partnerships to work with private landlords varies in relation to demand for accommodation, with Partnerships operating in low demand areas more likely to engage with private landlords than those operating in high demand areas. Thus in areas where households who have been evicted because of anti-social behaviour, can simply move into alternative privately owned accommodation in the same neighbourhood Partnerships were more likely to have developed initiatives to try to engage private landlords.

Developing partnerships with private landlords can be very difficult. They are not a homogeneous group, some people become landlords by default, for example as a result of inheritance or change of circumstance, while others have made a decision to invest in property. While some landlords may avoid all contact with statutory agencies, others would welcome greater information and support in dealing with anti-social tenants but are unsure of where to go for help. The range of different barriers that may hinder partnership working with private landlords are outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential barriers that need to be overcome in order to form a partnership with private landlords:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Many private landlords may be confused or unsure of where to go to get advice about dealing with anti-social tenants and may be wary of seeking legal advice because of the fear of high costs;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Landlords particularly those who only own a small number of properties may not be aware of the existing support and information services for private landlords such as those provided by the Small Landlords’ Association or the National Federation of Residential Landlords;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local authorities particularly those with active Tenancy Relations Officers and Environmental Health Officers may not be seen as allies of private landlords;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Private landlords can experience a sense of powerlessness and fear of retaliation in dealing with anti-social tenants and therefore be reluctant to take pro-active action.</td>
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Two of the case study areas, East Manchester and Gateshead had specifically set up programmes to involve private sector landlords. Both schemes were established to help partner agencies tackle neighbour nuisance across all tenures including private rented and owner occupation. Features of both schemes are outlined below:
In addition to the provision of advice and information, both areas also provided private landlords with a free reference or vetting schemes for new tenants. While the details of each scheme were slightly different they involved undertaking pre-tenancy checks with a range of other agencies including the police and the local authority housing department, to investigate past conduct and establish if there had been any history of rent arrears, neighbour nuisance or anti-social behaviour etc. Details of the potential information that can be collected in private landlord reference or vetting schemes and the issues that must be addressed if such schemes are to be successful are outlined below.

**Features of schemes to involve private landlords**

- The establishment of a private landlord forum/support programme providing a range of advice and assistance to private landlords in dealing with tenants;
- Specific training for landlords in relation to dealing with anti-social tenants. For example in Gateshead landlords had been provided with training, on drug and alcohol abuse, the role of the police in dealing with crime and disorder, and the use of legal sanctions to stop anti-social behaviour;
- Case work to assist private landlords deal with anti-social tenants including work with individual perpetrators and complainants;
- The East Manchester Neighbour Nuisance Team has developed a free Information Pack for private landlords which includes a standard tenancy agreement and information on where to go for assistance with different problems.

**For further information about the Private Landlords Information Pack contact:**
Graham Curel, Team Leader, East Manchester Neighbour Nuisance Team.
Telephone 0161 230 2100, Email g.curel@notes.manchester.gov.uk

Potential information to be included in reference or vetting scheme for private sector landlords:

- Where a previous property has been abandoned or left in poor condition;
- Where the applicant has outstanding rent or repair debts or similar with a current or former landlord;
- Where the applicant has been known to have been involved in incidents of anti-social behaviour or criminal behaviour which are likely to cause nuisance/annoyance to neighbours;
- Drug dealing/misuse;
- Violent assault against neighbours, council staff or previous landlords;
- Racial, sexual or other harassment of neighbours;
- Burglary;
- Noise or other nuisance e.g. persistent drunken behaviour.
Innovative Practice in Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour:

Despite the efforts that had been made to engage private landlords, in both areas agencies reported that generally it was only the ‘good’ landlords who were prepared to work in partnership to tackle anti-social behaviour, this led authorities to conclude that the only way to bring recalcitrant landlords on board was some form of compulsory licensing.

Development of effective strategic and operational responses

For Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships there are three sometimes-overlapping elements to working with individuals who have behaved in an anti-social manner:

- the use of preventive interventions,
- enforcement action including the use of ABCs and ASBOs,
- the provision of resettlement support to households who have been evicted or who are under threat of eviction as a result of anti-social behaviour.

The most effective interventions were found to be based on a balanced strategy, which involved a mixture of prevention, enforcement and support. In order to achieve such a balance it was important that CDRPs had:

- obtained reliable information about the extent and nature of the problem,
- established successful working partnerships,
- good communication with the local community.

The approach adopted by the Stockport Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team illustrates the importance of linking operational initiatives with strategic development and co-ordination of action, see below.
Prevention

Implementing successful preventative strategies and developing diversionary activities is dependent on agencies having an understanding of the particular problems of anti-social behaviour in an area and insight into the underlying causes. Practitioners reported that the success of preventative work with individuals was dependent in part on the sanctions that could be brought to bear if the anti-social behaviour continued and thus it was considered important to be clear that enforcement action would be taken if necessary. Most agencies favoured early use of preventative measures, residents on the other hand tended to prefer a more enforcement-led approach. It was important to address residents' reservations through consultation and dialogue.

OBTAINING EVIDENCE

The collection of reliable information was seen as key to taking effective action against individuals. Agencies reported using a number of sources of information. Gathering information about individual perpetrators from other agencies was facilitated through the use of information sharing protocols and case conferencing. In addition CCTV and the collection of photographic evidence was found to be very useful particularly when dealing with youth nuisance or monitoring ASBOs/ABCs. In order for CCTV to be used in this way there are a number of issues which have to be addressed (see box below).

Key issues in using CCTV to obtain evidence

- Avoid using CCTV systems with long time lapse sequences.
- If the system is to be used for monitoring ASBOs, or a form of evidence collection high resolution images are required.
- Decide who will monitor the system and how often.
- Decide on the location of cameras and how frequently they will be moved.

The work of Stockport Youth Anti-social Behaviour Action Team (YASBAT) to co-ordinate initiatives

A key part of the YASBAT’s role was to develop partnerships to tackle anti-social behaviour. Indeed many of the operational strategies they devised for individuals, or for problematic locations, required input from a range of agencies and included working with the police on surveillance and developing support packages with Social Services, Education Welfare, and the Youth Service, or providing support for parents through Youth Offending Team parenting classes etc.

The team has the ability to expand and change the focus of their work as and when it may be necessary to respond to emerging issues. For example, in their efforts to bring all relevant agencies together to tackle anti-social behaviour they have actively, and successfully sought to engage with teachers and head teachers which respondents reported as having proved very beneficial. One respondent explained that teachers no longer feel ‘alone’ dealing with difficult pupils and know they can report anti-social behaviour to the YASBAT. As a result of this initiative schools are less likely to exclude pupils and work to keep them in school in conjunction with support received from YASBAT.

For more details about the work of the Stockport YASBAT Team contact:
Keith Swindell Telephone 0161 476 2876. Email Keith.swindell@stockport.gov.uk
Residents are potentially one of the most important sources of information about anti-social behaviour however, agencies reported that in many areas residents were reluctant to become involved. A number of measures to encourage resident reporting of incidences are listed in the box below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers to residents reporting anti-social behaviour</th>
<th>Ways of overcoming the barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Confusion over which agency to complain to;</td>
<td>• Establish a multi-agency team in the area and publicise different agencies’ respective roles through holding well advertised surgeries in different areas, including those with private rented housing, putting posters in office windows, leafleting households in a particular area, mail-shots to particular streets or areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• History of poor response to residents’ complaints;</td>
<td>• Ensure complaints are taken seriously by all agencies and are given priority for action;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Apathy/sense of powerlessness to effect change;</td>
<td>• Appoint lead officers within relevant agencies to take responsibility for follow up action and feedback to residents;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inability to identify the perpetrator(s) or unwillingness/fear of intimidation;</td>
<td>• Consider the use of service level agreements; and work with residents groups to establish priorities for action;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Denial of problems/concern by residents that reporting anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance could contribute to a spiral of decline in the neighbourhood and lower house prices;</td>
<td>• Consider use of neighbourhood/street wardens/professional witness schemes; Provide complainants with support including additional security arrangements where necessary;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low community ownership of public space.</td>
<td>• A creative approach to the provision of a wide variety of community development activities including diversionary activities to tackle some of the underlying problems;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Be seen to be doing something but be careful about ‘quick wins’ which could displace the problem;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In consultation with residents, undertake an environmental audit to establish priorities for improvement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR CONTRACTS (ABCS)**

ABC’s are a relatively new form of intervention, which straddle the boundaries between prevention and enforcement action. They are voluntary agreements usually made between young people involved in anti-social behaviour, and their parents and the local police, and the relevant social housing landlord. If the terms of the contract are breached eviction action or ASBO proceedings may be commenced. Currently ABCs are most commonly used to deal with tenants or children of tenants of social landlords but there is no reason why they should not be adapted to deal with youth nuisance amongst with owner-occupiers and private tenants. For further details of the use of ABCs see the Home Office (2002) *A Guide to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts*. 
In general Partnerships who used ABCs viewed them as an effective means of dealing with individuals, especially young people involved in anti-social behaviour. For agencies involved in operating ABCs the procedure was relatively standard. The way in which they were used in Northampton was typical (see below):

**Good practice in using ABCs**

- Ensure the young person and their parent(s) or guardian is provided with adequate notice of the meeting;
- Consider whether the young person would benefit from the support of social services or an independent agency and if so invite a representative to come to the meeting;
- Use a senior officer to conduct the meeting rather than a front line officer;
- If photographic or video evidence is being relied on make sure the young person and their parent(s) have an opportunity to view the evidence;
- Ensure the terms of the ABC are understood and can be met by the individual (this should be achieved through negotiation)– do not set them up to fail;
- Be clear about the sanctions that will be used if the contract is broken;
- Where appropriate offer diversionary activities alongside the ABC or tackle underlying problems such as drug or alcohol abuse, mental health problems, school exclusions etc;
- In multi-landlord areas ensure all landlords are involved.

Northampton's ABC procedure

ABCs are considered in all cases of persistent youth nuisance but they are most commonly used with children of social housing tenants. If it is thought that an ABC is necessary the housing officer speaks to his/her manager and the matter is raised at a regular meeting with the Crime and Disorder Unit manager. If it is agreed that this is the way to proceed then the offender and their parent(s) or guardian are asked to come to the housing office, usually accompanied by someone from social services or another appropriate support agency. The contract is discussed and explained and the offender and parent/guardian offered the services of social services or other agency to help them keep to the agreement. It is a joint decision made by different agencies, a lot of consideration is given to whether an ABC will work.

For more details about the use of ABCs contact: Bill Edwards, Crime and Disorder Unit Manager, Housing Office, Northampton Borough Council, Western Favell, Northampton. Tel: 01604 788109

There were differences in how closely the ABC process was linked to ASBO proceedings. Some agencies used them principally as a way of getting evidence for an ASBO while others linked them to them to the landlord role with the local authority housing department generally taking the lead role. Those with extensive use of using ABCs reported that in the majority of cases the agreement had not been breached. Drawing on CDRPs’ experiences, good practice in the use of ABCs is outlined in the box below:
Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs)

The main enforcement tool considered in the research was anti-social behaviour orders. CDRPs reported mixed experiences on the use of these. Partnerships that were most positive about ASBOs had committed very firmly to their use and had set up dedicated teams or panels to progress cases. Although in theory ASBOs can be used to deal with any one over the age of 10, in the case study sample the majority of ASBOs had been used to deal with problems on local authority housing estates and very few ASBO proceedings had been started against private rented tenants or owner occupiers. Unless CDRPs give greater priority to taking action to deal with youth nuisance and anti-social behaviour in areas of private housing there is a danger of ASBOs being seen as a ‘social housing’ tool focused on local authority housing estates.

In cases where there was no option but to take enforcement action, ASBOs were considered to have a number of advantages as compared to other forms of action available to landlords (see box below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages of ASBOs over other housing action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Focuses on the individual perpetrators rather than his or her family;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The action can be preventative rather than simply excluding;</td>
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<td>• They reduce the risk that the problem will be displaced;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• They may be preferable to injunctions because of their greater availability against young people;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where ASBOs are targeted at ring leaders they can have a deterrent effect on the wider group;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ASBOs are civil orders but a breach of an ASBO is a criminal offence attracting a criminal penalty.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The recognition of the difficulties that many CDRPs reported in the use of ASBOs, the Police Reform Act 2002, has introduced a series of changes designed to strengthen the use of ASBOs and enhance their effectiveness (see box below):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Police Reform Act 2002</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The introduction of an interim ASBO designed to put a quicker stop to the anti-social behaviour and help protect witnesses;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Empower Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the British Transport Police to apply directly for ASBOs and tackle anti-social behaviour more quickly;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enable the county court to make ASBOs in particular circumstance and thereby remove the need for a separate legal process (the measure is not effective until April 2003);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extend the geographical area an ASBO can cover to a wider area; up to the whole of England and Wales if necessary. This measure has been designed to address the problem of displacement amongst people who are likely to continue their anti-social behaviour in other areas;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enable the criminal courts to make an ASBO against a person who has been convicted of a criminal offence. This measure removes the need for a separate legal process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Excluding tenants

Commonly some form of exclusion policies are used in relation to those who have been evicted from social housing tenancies as a result of anti-social behaviour. The most useful policies were designed to protect particular neighbourhoods rather than whole local authority areas, since blanket exclusions across the whole of landlord's stock may simply displace those evicted into the private sector. An example of a selective exclusion policy is provided below:

The use of selective exclusion policies

In Gateshead social landlords letting officers were encouraged to consider the effect of a potential letting on the local community, taking into account a range of issues:

- The number of children already living on the estate;
- The neighbours of the new letting and their needs;
- The number of lone parents living in the area;
- The numbers of people in and out of work;
- The number of young singles living in the area;
- The history of the tenancy; and
- The likely views of the community.

For more details about this initiative contact: Deborah Ewing, Neighbour Relations Co-ordinator, Gateshead Private Landlords Scheme, Gateshead Council, Civic Centre Regent St, Gateshead NE8 1HH. Telephone 0191 4333000

Resettlement and supporting tenants

It is increasingly recognised that anti-social behaviour strategies are more effective if they incorporate measures to help perpetrators change their behaviour. Offering support services to tenants evicted as a result of anti-social behaviour will often avoid the problems of displacement, and address the underlying causes of the anti-social behaviour. An example of the way in which prevention, enforcement and resettlement action can be combined to effectively deal with a very serious form of anti-social behaviour was found in an initiative to deal with crack houses operating in Kensington and Chelsea (see below).

Kensington and Chelsea Crack House Protocol

The Crack House Rapid Reaction Protocol was developed by a multi-agency project team consisting of representatives from: the Police; a local RSL; five officers from different sections of the Local Authority including Legal Services, Housing Needs, Social Services, Drugs Action Team and the Housing Department plus representatives from the Tenants Management Organisation. The project objectives are:

- to utilise community and police intelligence to identify crack houses at the earliest opportunity;
- to ensure a rapid response from all partner agencies to deal with crack houses once identified;
- to minimise the risks of a crack houses re-establishing after closure;

continued over
Although the resettlement of perpetrators has not been addressed directly by most CDRPs much of the work of local authorities and other social landlords is designed to support vulnerable tenants. There may however, be a core of families for whom a more intensive direct intervention is necessary and the development of dedicated anti-social behaviour resettlement projects may be required. Bolton and Manchester are the first local authorities in England to develop such provision. Features of their approach are outlined below:

**Key Features of Bolton and Manchester’s Anti-Social Resettlement Services**

- They form part of well-developed, comprehensive anti-social behaviour strategies that recognise the inter-related nature of preventative, enforcement, and resettlement action;
- They have been designed to support families who either have been evicted or threatened with eviction from social housing as a result of anti-social behaviour and who have the capacity to change;

The protocol focuses on crack houses established in social housing tenancies. The team aims to co-ordinate a response to a crack house within seven working days of it being identified, and close it down within 42 working days. The protocol also aims to ‘develop an information sharing protocol between housing providers and housing needs to reduce the possibility of vulnerable tenants being housed inappropriately in areas that may put them at greater risk of being targeted by drug dealers’.

**Rehousing and resettlement action**

When a crack house is identified the following action is taken to support tenants in dealing with addiction:

- An inter-agency meeting takes place (including RBKC Substance Use Social Work Team, Housing Manager, RBKC Substance Use Resettlement Officer, and relevant health support workers) and an assessment is made as to whether the tenants are vulnerable and what action should be taken;
- The tenant is offered a range of options including emergency accommodation and drug/alcohol treatment programme, and other support;
- The tenant undergoes treatment;
- The tenant is resettled (providing they have voluntarily surrendered their original tenancy), and is usually signed up to an ABC.

The project is monitored, not only in terms of the number of crack houses closed down but also in terms of longer-term impacts. The team is aware of the danger of enforcement action resulting in displacement of the problem so they monitor the original tenant of the crack house for up to one year after taking action to establish that they have not opened another crack house. At the time of the fieldwork over 97 crack houses had been closed down.

For more details about Kensington and Chelsea Crack House Protocol contact: Linda Oola, DAT Information and Research Officer, Community Safety Team, Whitlock House, 72-74 Earls Court Rd, London, W8 6EQ. Telephone 0207 938 3013
Summary

The research findings illustrate the diverse range of innovative approaches that are being developed by local CDRPs and their member agencies to deal with anti-social behaviour. As expertise in this area of work is developed it is increasingly recognised that anti-social behaviour is frequently a symptom of much wider long term problems in a neighbourhood. It is essential that interventions are well planned and co-ordinated taking into account both the short and long term needs of the particular area or neighbourhood. The work is resource intensive and requires a long-term commitment from agencies operating at both a strategic and operational level.
The study methods

The study was based on information collected from a range of different sources including a survey of Crime and Disorder Partnerships, a survey of social landlords, interviews with a range of agencies operating in 11 case study areas and a seminar for practitioners and policy makers.

For a more detailed report see Tackling Anti-social Behaviour in Mixed Tenure Areas, ODPM ISBN 1 85112 615 5, Price £20 available from ODPM Publications, PO Box No 236, Wetherby LS23 7NB, Tel: 0870 1226 236, E-mail: odpm@twoten.press.net or via the ODPM web site www.housing.odpm.gov.uk

Related work and further information

There are now numerous publications and guides to help agencies working to tackle anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance.

The Home Office Crime Reduction Web site contains up to date information on all aspects of the Government’s Crime Reduction Strategy including details of the changes introduced by the Police Reform Act 2002 which comes into force on 2nd December 2002. The site also contains Anti-social Behaviour Crime Reduction Toolkits which provide a summary of knowledge and good practice about anti-social behaviour, mainly from the crime dimension but also covering social housing issues: www.crimereduction.gov.uk

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister web site contains useful information about developing strategies to tackle anti-social behaviour and has published research and good practice guidance on landlord accreditation schemes, which is available to download from: www.housing.odpm.gov.uk

RaceActionNet is an interactive password protected web site run by Lemos and Crane consultants which covers good practice in tackling racial harassment some of which is very useful in addressing anti-social behaviour.

The web site address is: www.RaceActionNet.co.uk

Housemark is a pass operated web site run the Chartered Institute of Housing and Arthur Anderson. It covers good practice and financial benchmarking on housing management issues including anti-social behaviour. The address is: www.housemark.co.uk
Other useful publications

District Audit. London

Community Safety Practice Briefing NACRO London

Campbell S (2002a) Implementing Anti-social Behaviour Orders: messages for practitioners
Home Office Research Findings 160 Home Office. London

236 Home Office. London

Contracts. Home Office. London

Social Housing. Arden’s Housing Library, Lemos and Crane. London

approaches to community safety. LGA Research Report 24 LGA Publications London

studies about Local Authority Work LGA Research Briefing 16. LGA Publications London

Joseph Rowntree Foundation/Chartered Institute of Housing. Coventry

O’Carroll D and Scott S (2002) Anti-social Behaviour in the private sector in Scotland:
Problems and Remedies Department of Urban Studies University of Glasgow. Glasgow