

Introduction

Antisocial behaviour (ASB) can be defined as behaviour by a person which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm, or distress to any person. It can be targeted at a specific person or group, can cause nuisance, annoyance and suffering to a community and can affect the wider environment, such as public spaces or buildings.

Most ASB incidents (issues like noise nuisance, fly tipping, parking issues (non-obstructive), littering etc) are not recorded as crimes and should be reported to the relevant Local Authority. However persistent ASB is a very visible sign of disorder in our communities, and therefore tackling ASB is one of the four priorities in my Police and Crime Plan.

ASB can lead to community tensions and have a significant impact on people's health, wellbeing and their daily quality of life. The police, local authorities, other agencies and our communities need to work together to find solutions and stop persistent and severe ASB from blighting our communities. This includes tackling issues in our neighbourhoods and town centres such as drug dealing and drug taking.

Police and Crime Plan Measures and Indicators

- Reclaim town centres for the general public from those undertaking ASB, and rebuild public confidence in the public realm and make our city, town and village centres more resilient to ASB.
- Ensure that victims of persistent and severe ASB in our communities are heard and know how to get help.
- Increase visible foot patrols to deter ASB in our communities.
- Work with policing and partners to deliver a robust and targeted partnership approach, using the range of powers available to all partners.

| Direction of Travel | Variance compared to baseline |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ▽ ▲ | 2.5%+/- than baseline |
| ▶ | = to baseline or less than 2.5% higher or lower than the baseline |
| Change from last Panel | |
| ▲ = increase | ▶ = no change |
| ▽ = decrease | |

| Interpretation of trend | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| | Indicative of positive trend |
| | Indicative of stable trend |
| | Indicative of negative trend |
| | Trend status not assigned |

| ASB | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Performance Measure | Baseline | Preferred direction of travel | Reported to Jan 23 Panel | Reported to Sept 23 Panel | Change from last Panel | Change from Baseline |
| Recorded number of ASB incidents | 39,026 | ▽ | 27,842 | 24,518 | ▽ | ▽ |
| Recorded number of public order incidents | 7,061 | | 8,433 | 7,577 | ▽ | ▲ |

What are we doing?

Proactively tackling antisocial behaviour (ASB) - Operation Loki

Between March and May 2023 an additional focus was placed on neighbourhood policing within our Safer Streets (Torquay, Exeter, Barnstaple, Plymouth, Truro and Falmouth) areas to improve public confidence, visibility and make our communities feel safer.

Running for four weeks in each Local Policing Area, the neighbourhood policing teams tailored their activities to target specific local issues, deploying a full range of policing tactics and powers. This included violence against women and girls, the evening and night-time economy (ENTE) and antisocial behaviour.

Activities included:

- Traffic operations in collaboration with the No Excuse team
- ENTE operations targeting drugs supply
- 'Pop-up' police stations
- Licensing visits and engagement, including test purchase operations of shops selling vapes and alcohol
- Engagement and crime prevention surveys
- High-visibility patrols by regular officers, Special Constabulary and Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) partners
- Community engagement by Diverse Community Teams, Police Support Volunteers, Volunteer Police Cadets, and Chaplaincy
- Deployments for warrants, shoplifting and youth ASB
- Advice and guidance from Designing Out Crime staff



Op Loki outcomes

- **156** arrests made
- **115** licensed premises visited
- **666** community engagement events attended
- **78** safeguarding referrals made

Commitments met -

- Increase visible foot patrols to deter ASB in our communities.
- Reclaim town centres for the general public from those undertaking ASB, and rebuild public confidence in the public realm and make our city, town and village centres more resilient to ASB.

Supporting Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

Councils are responsible for implementing Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), which impose restrictions on behaviour in defined locations. For example, they can prevent street drinking in public spaces, or prevent noisy groups from gathering. Failure to comply with an order is a criminal offence and can lead to a fine by the Police or a Council Officer.

As Police and Crime Commissioner I must be consulted on all PSPO applications, and I am required to provide a formal written response detailing whether or not I am in support. In the past 18 months, I have responded to 5 consultations and provided support for PSPOs in:

- Exeter City Centre
- Teignmouth
- Bideford
- Tavistock Meadows
- Exmouth Town Centre



Whilst PSPOs can be a useful tool, their enforcement remains inconsistent across Devon and Cornwall and requires closer scrutiny.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's recently published ['Out of Order': learning lessons from complaints about antisocial behaviour](#) highlights the powers that local councils already have to tackle ASB and urges councils to utilise these powers more often to take enforcement action and help victims.

ASB Case Review and escalation process to the OPCC

If an individual (or others) have reported an incident three or more times within a six-month period and not received a satisfactory response, they can activate the ASB Case Review through their local authority. Details on how to request a Case Review can be found on each Local Authority website.

If following an ASB Case review, the applicant remains unsatisfied with the outcome they can, in certain circumstances, escalate their case to my office to request a review of the way an application for an ASB Case Review was dealt with, and also the way their ASB Case review was carried out.' The circumstances for escalation are:

1. The Relevant Bodies have rejected an application to use the ASB Case Review on the basis that the threshold has not been met and the Victim considers that the threshold has been met;
2. The ASB Case Review has failed to consider a relevant process, policy or protocol;
3. The ASB Case Review has failed to consider relevant factual evidenced information.

My office has undertaken two ASB Case Review escalations in the last 12 months.

Commitment met -

- Work with policing and partners to deliver a robust and targeted partnership approach, using the range of powers available to all partners.

Services commissioned by the OPCC to tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB)

ASB Youth Outreach - Utilising Street-based Youth Work to lessen antisocial behaviour

Preventing ASB occurring and escalating benefits communities. It is for this reason my office has commissioned an ASB outreach service which seeks to engage young people in positive, developmental opportunities, sometimes including activities which deliberately contain an element of 'risk' (such as go carting). The aim is to enable young people to be better able to identify risk and their effect on others.

The commissioned outreach service is led by Space Youth Services with delivery services across the Peninsula by Space, Young Devon and Young People Cornwall. The outreach work happens in the places where these groups usually socialise or gather such as local parks, skate parks and outside local shops.

382 youth work sessions have been carried out between August 2022 and June 2023 across Devon and Cornwall and have made a real impact on the communities and the young people involved.

Case study examples

- Work in **Barnstaple** where young people previously engaged in ASB gave up their mornings in the Easter holiday to work on a gardening project at the Youth Centre.
- In **Newton Abbot** the project worked with a particularly large co-hort of young people – 20 of whom have now signed up to attend activities at the local youth club and one of the young people has landed a job with Space (the lead organisation) in a peer educator role.
- In **Plymouth** the service worked closely with the City Council to de-escalate concerns around Coxside and the Barbican ensuring young people engaged in ASB were diverted into other activities including enjoying the local skate park and football club.

ASB Victim Support Service



Just because an ASB incident is not a crime should not detract from the support a victim or the community can access; the emotional and health consequences of an incident can be equally as detrimental. It is for this reason my office has commissioned a dedicated ASB victim support service to support people affected by ASB to cope and recover.

In addition to the emotional support provided, the dedicated caseworkers signpost, refer and advocate on behalf of their clients, working on a "honest broker" basis, in that they liaise with partner agencies and are willing to deliver unwelcome messages to both clients and partners.

In the 12 months to 31st July 2023, 184 people have received ASB support services from Victim Support.

ASB Mediation Service

Each ASB case is different so there is not one intervention that fits all. In terms of neighbour disputes, mediation has proved to be successful in reducing conflict and preventing escalation to the police, enabling communities to access the self-help tools they need to prevent ASB escalation and increasing options for conflict resolution and crime reduction.

My office has commissioned Devon Community Mediation Service and Northern Devon Community Mediation Service to offer mediation across Devon. Separate funding is being held for Cornwall to enable access for private mediation, as and when the need is identified. In 2023/24 I have made **£480,000** available to support this priority.

Commitment met -

- Ensure that victims of persistent and severe ASB in our communities are heard and know how to get help.