

REPORT: SAFER PLYMOUTH PRIORITY – ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

DATE: 23 JANUARY 2015



Introduction

The Safer Plymouth Partnership priorities are to reduce the incidence of ASB in the City and increase the number of vulnerable victims supported by the ASB Victims Champion Service.

CDDG is the lead group in this area and members include Community Safety Partnership, Police, Devon and Somerset Fe Service, Youth Offending Service, Plymouth Community Homes, Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, Victim Support, Plymouth University, Plymouth Argyle amongst others.

Nature of ASB – ASB differs from other types of crime and disorder in that the perception of the victim is crucial. Therefore relatively low level incidents can have a high impact on highly vulnerable people.

CDDG Group meets bi-monthly and takes a holistic, multi-agency approach to ASB reduction, carefully monitoring and analysing reporting data to identify behaviour patterns or 'hotspots', whilst appreciating that 'spikes' can reflect the actions of one individual on one day. If a 'hotspot' is identified, neighbourhood policing teams are informed and action taken. Targets to reduce offending have been largely met over the last 5 years and represent relatively low numbers of offences. The group understands that ASB offenders are not limited to the stereotypical young offender and looks at measures to address all offending behaviours.

Current City provision –

- Specific ASB officers who deal with offenders.
- Dedicated ASB Unit to co-ordinate tackling ASB including crime reduction and co-ordinating mediation
- Extensive multi-agency work between PCC, Police, DSFRS, Public Protection Unit and Environmental Health, social housing providers, voluntary organisations and business community involvement including MAM, CAF, VARF meetings.
- Focus on both targeting offenders and addressing environmental issues to reduce the opportunity for ASB i.e. PCH action on homes left unoccupied.
- Punitive and supportive interventions which including education, housing, health and leisure opportunities which support individuals to avoid re-offending.
- Support by PDAS and Harbour to help people whose experiences of high risk DA or substance abuse are affecting those around them.
- Appreciation of seasonal variances in ASB i.e. tomb stoning in summer, fire issues around Bonfire night and planning to minimise environmental opportunities and maximise safer diversionary options i.e. organised events.

- PCH provide a range of services to tenants including;
 1. a pro-active response to reports of ASB engaging with both victims and perpetrators to unpick the issue and provide appropriate support,
 2. Noise Monitoring Equipment to establish the extent of alleged noise nuisance,

3. ASB out of hours reporting service with reports sent to Housing Officers the next day,
4. Free access to a professional mediator to help establish acceptable behaviours,
5. free access to the Family Intervention Project(FIP) and the Individual Intervention Programme for those requiring more extensive, on-going support.

Prevention –

- DSFRS schemes for young people such as Phoenix and the Firesetters Intervention Scheme to prevent and reduce fire starting,
- Argyle Community Trust's Kicks programme and other intervention programmes aim to reduce crime and ASB, providing positive activities/education for targeted areas and breaking down barriers between young people and police .
- PCH - senior staff meet with other RSLs at the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group to establish best practices, hold estate walkabouts where residents can suggest safety improvements and the Money Tree Fund supports residents and staff to make physical changes to the environment which will help combat ASB.
- Plymouth University works to prevent students from being either victims or perpetrators of ASB.
- PCC Sports Development Unit provide diversionary activities for 14-25 year olds including the Citywide Football Project and Street Games programme. PCC, working with the Youth Service, maximise accessibility to these schemes by making them free or low cost and keeping locations local rather than central. This work is largely targeted in the most deprived areas of the city which tend to have higher levels of ASB.

Reducing public concern –

- CSP organises focus weeks around Plymouth to increase public awareness of ASB reduction work and to encourage public involvement in tackling ASB.
- The 'Have your Say' scheme allows the public to raise concerns about ASB.
- The new Community Trigger tool allows communities to bring to account any agency they feel is failing in their duty to address ASB.

Work with Victims – the Victims Champion project supports those most at risk from ASB due to their vulnerability either face to face or by telephone and has a strong focus on co-ordinating multi-agency support for clients. The service has recently experienced staffing issues and is currently under review. Sarah Hopkins is working with Victim Support Divisional Manager Rhiannon Evans to refocus the service to provide more intense support to the most vulnerable ASB victims in the City, including a review of the target to increase the number of clients supported in 2014/15 to 300. It has been acknowledged that quality support to the most vulnerable is preferable to diluted support to a larger number. Satisfaction rate for those engaging with the project is above target at 96%.

Gaps in provision –

- Restorative Justice (RJ) – this is being discussed at CDDG meetings but not in place at present.
- PCH and DSFRS have identified little support for hoarders; hoarding has significant ASB and public safety aspects and crosses many agency borders.

- CDDG have identified that a Plymouth Vulnerability Forum based on the successful Torbay forum format would encourage effective and efficient multi-agency support for vulnerable clients with complex needs. Such clients are often referred to the Victims Champion Service as a last resort even when there is little ASB occurring and such a forum would help this service concentrate on clients who have real ASB issues.

Challenges -

- Introduction and implementation of the new ASB tools and powers reduces the number available from 16 to 6 bringing opportunities and challenges. ASB Unit is delivering preparatory training for the police to address any confusion.
- Staying open to the variety of overlapping issues that can come under ASB i.e. hoarding, human trafficking.
- CDDG meeting - Unitary authority can lead to a small number of people in senior positions. Input from a variety of sources could avoid any complacency or stagnation in the group. Regular attendance is challenging for all agencies in current economic climate.
- Providing on-going support to highly vulnerable victims of ASB is a resource heavy endeavour and adequate funding is challenging in the current financial climate.

Recommendation:

Members of Safer Plymouth are asked to:

- Note and discuss this report.

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11th January 2015

Thanks for information provided by:

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