

Anti-social behaviour Reduction Strategy for Wiltshire

2009 - 2011

1. FOREWORD

Tackling Anti Social Behaviour is an important issue facing our communities today as it blights the lives of people who want to enjoy the community they live in. The Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership takes this issue very seriously and in this strategy we have set out our plans, methods and ways for working together with Wiltshire communities to show that ASB is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

We believe that this work needs to be done jointly by services within the statutory and voluntary sectors, whilst ensuring that the neighbourhoods affected are fully engaged with the solutions that provide relief from the problems causing their distress or concern.

The Wiltshire Anti Social Behaviour Strategy will enable partners to consolidate efforts and approaches to tackling ASB, develop toolkits to be used within communities, manage and support individual cases reported, and communicate how specific problems have been dealt with whilst reassuring victims that their case is being dealt with as a matter of utmost priority.

I commend this strategy as a working tool to be used in supporting victims of ASB through prevention, intervention, enforcement activities and above all provide increasing public confidence that Wiltshire is a Safe County to live, work and relax in.

Maggie Rae,
Chair of Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership

2. BACKGROUND

Wiltshire has one of the lowest rates of recorded crime in England. Public surveys in the county show that residents consistently rate 'a low level of crime' in first or second position when asked "what makes somewhere a good place to live".

Perception of anti-social behaviour often involves clashes of values and standards. Young people look for excitement and action; the elder community may prefer peace and quiet. People have different levels of tolerance for noise, for untidiness, and for rowdiness.

Definitions of anti-social behaviour and levels of tolerance differ widely within and between the various communities that make up Wiltshire's population. Negotiating levels of acceptable behaviour requires an even-handed and open approach which is balanced by support and proportional use of enforcement tools and powers for those whose behaviour is persistently unacceptable.

Partnership working is essential to prevent and reduce anti-social behavior in order to provide a balanced, evidence based response to protect communities and individuals. Tackling anti-social behaviour is everyone's responsibility and we all need to work together to enable all members of our community to live their lives without fear of crime. The Wiltshire Community Safety partnership has drawn up this Anti Social Behaviour Reduction Strategy to provide a county-wide framework to deliver targeted, effective solutions and actions to both local and county-wide issues.

The strategy also incorporates the principles encapsulated in Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006 which enjoined all public authorities to place a concern with reducing crime at the centre of their agenda.

3. WILTSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership signatories comprise of representatives from the following responsible authorities:

Wiltshire Police
Wiltshire Council
Wiltshire Police Authority
Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
Wiltshire NHS
Wiltshire and Swindon Probation Service
Wiltshire Youth Offending Service

4. WHAT IS ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR?

The statutory definition of anti-social behaviour, as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, is behaviour...**that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as (the perpetrator).**

Anti-social behaviour can affect whole communities, not just individuals; where it is frequent or persistent, it can increase people's perception of crime and feelings of safety.

4.1 The main forms of Anti-Social Behaviour

Behaviour directed against specific individuals or groups

- Harrassment/intimidations – making threats, bullying
- Nuisance neighbours; excessive noise, disputes
- Hoax calls – nuisance calls/texts/emails/false calls to emergency services
- Malicious communication

Behaviour that degrades the local environment

- Animal problems, e.g. Dog-fouling, dog barking
- Noise nuisance
- Abandoned vehicles
- Littering, graffiti and fly-tipping
- Trespass

Behaviour restricting access to public space

- Vehicle nuisance – eg. speeding
- Rowdy/nuisance behaviour
- Substance misuse
- Street drinking/drunkenness
- Begging/vagrancy
- Fireworks misuse/fire setting
- Prostitution/kerb crawling – loitering, pestering resident

5. UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGY:

The Wiltshire Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy will provide a framework to promote effective, coordinated action against anti-social behaviour at both local and countywide levels. It will offer a link between the Government's Public Service Agreement to Wiltshire's Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets to:

1. provide public reassurance
2. reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
3. build confidence in the criminal justice system

It will focus on the delivery of services and responses being developed and implemented by all organizations and local partnerships that exist across Wiltshire

The strategy sets out how anti-social behaviour will be tackled in Wiltshire through prevention, intervention, enforcement and reassurance, using the powers and tools and resources of the partnership agencies and our communities.

The Strategy will be supported by an Implementation Plan to deliver and monitor countywide actions and enable effective practice to be shared. The Implementation Plan will facilitate a coordinated and operational approach to anti-social behaviour between all members of the Community Safety Partnership, voluntary organisations and local partnerships. The contribution of education, social services, leisure services, youth services, transport, housing services, the police, probation, Housing Associations, and fire services are all vital to achieving the targets.

This partnership strategy is underpinned by the following key national and local drivers and is open to responding to new national and local needs.

A. Legislation

Crime and Disorder Act 1998
Police Reform Act 2002
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
National Community Safety Plan
Police and Justice Act 2006
Police Pledge – Safer Neighbourhoods Act
Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods Strategy 2010

B. Public Service and Local Area Agreements

In 2007, Public Service Agreements (PSAs) setting out Government's high level objectives for service delivery were published, and included:

PSA 23: Making communities safer
PSA 25: Reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drugs.

The National Indicator set was introduced in 2007 to measure performance against the PSAs. Two improvement targets for the period 2009 - 2011 relating to anti-social behaviour were negotiated through the Local Area Agreement

NI 17: Perception of anti-social behaviour to be reduced by 1.8% over 2 years (from 12.6% to 10.8% of respondents)

NI 21: Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by local councils and police. (A target to increase the number of those who agree from 27.8% to 50% over 2 years)

In 2009, the authorities and organisations who are members of the Wiltshire

Assembly signed the Local Agreement Wiltshire (LAW) and agreed to work together to deliver their ambitions for Wiltshire, and anti-social behaviour is implicated in one of the priorities.

Ambition 5 of the Local Agreement Wiltshire is
“To reduce particular crimes, change behaviours and inform the public to bring about communities that are safe and feel safe”.

C. Minimum Standards of Service to Victims and Witnesses

All member agencies of the Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership have agreed to deliver the following services to victims and witness of anti-social behaviour to ensure that

- All victims and witnesses are treated fairly with dignity and respect, with all instances of anti-social behaviour taken seriously, applying a multi agency problem solving solution where appropriate.
- Victims and sufferers who report anti-social behaviour to Wiltshire Council or the Police, and who do not require an immediate response will be contacted within 3 working days to determine the level of support required.
- Reports of anti-social behaviour (taken by Wiltshire Council or another agency), requiring an immediate response will be forwarded to the Police without delay if it is inappropriate for that agency to deal with the incident.
- Victims and witnesses who suffer an identified series of anti-social behaviour incidents will be fully supported and kept informed of agencies progress and their actions if the victim requires it. All appropriate services and support will be made known to the victim.
- All agencies share relevant anti-social behaviour information and intelligence to identify location hotspots, known perpetrators and affected parties and will respond purposefully and speedily to such intelligence.
- Communities and individuals are encouraged to:
 1. take ownership of their neighbourhoods
 2. report incidents of anti-social behaviour to their Neighbourhood Police Teams (NPT)/ Wiltshire Council
 3. attend their local Police and Community meetings
 4. identify their priorities and be part of the problem solving solution
- Communities will be kept informed about who represents which agency within their neighbourhood and how to contact them. This information will be available on the Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership web-site.
- All partner agencies will have a clear understanding of each other’s roles and responsibilities. They will work together to tackle anti-social behaviour and support the victims of anti-social behaviour.
- Communities will be kept informed about what is happening within their neighbourhood through regular community meetings (Community Area Boards, Neighbourhood Police meetings, etc), Area Board and Neighbourhood Police Team newsletters and leaflet distribution (when appropriate).

- Regular perception surveys will be carried out by the Neighbourhood Police Teams to enable the communities to comment on the level of anti-social behaviour within their neighbourhood and how they feel about it.
- Victims have the right of complaint to the Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership through their elected members if they consider that agencies have failed to act to curb persistent anti-social behaviour directed towards an individual or individuals and the matter cannot be resolved through the individual agencies normal complaints procedure or the Community Call for Action.

6. KEY NATIONAL STATISTICS

Crime has fallen by more than a third since 1998 when the Crime and Disorder Act was passed, and a statutory duty was placed on the responsible authorities to work in partnership.

Nationally, Anti-Social Behavior remains a serious issue with around 66,000 reports of ASB made to authorities each day. However, the public are more confident that police and local councils are dealing with local crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues and perceptions of ASB are at their lowest since records began eight years ago.

The British Crime Survey (BCS) is used to measure 'high' levels of perceived anti-social behavior from responses to seven individual anti-social behavior strands: abandoned or burnt-out cars; noisy neighbors or loud parties; young people hanging around; people being drunk or rowdy; people using or dealing drugs; rubbish or litter lying around; and vandalism or graffiti. The latest figures indicate that the proportion of people who perceived high levels of anti-social behaviour decreased to 17% in 2008/09 from the peak of 21% of people in 2002/03. However, there are signs that it is beginning to creep up, as a result of particular concerns about drunk or rowdy behaviour and young people hanging around.

7. LOCAL PROFILE

In order to determine the priorities for the strategy, information from a range of sources was used which included The Partnership Strategic Assessment carried out in 2007, the Police Anti-Social Behaviour Problem Profile (June 2009), Wiltshire Council's People's Voice Survey 2009, the DCLG Place Survey 2008, and the Police Authority 'Safe and Satisfied' Survey 2009.

Police data (Wiltshire Police Strategic Assessment 2008) indicated that that Wiltshire Police (excluding Swindon) received around 30 reports of ASB and Criminal Damage each day. Analysis of this data has revealed that there were four high priority areas in Wiltshire which accounted for 54% of all ASB reported to the Police, and further analysis showed that the top four categories of ASB within these areas were:

- Rowdy/nuisance behaviour
- Vehicle nuisance
- Street drinking
- Noise

Findings from the 'Safe and Satisfied' survey indicated that the biggest crime and anti-social behaviour issues were considered to be :

- Traffic offences
- Young people hanging around
- Rubbish or litter lying around
- Being drunk or rowdy in public places.

However, 40% of respondents said there were no crime or anti-social behaviour problems in their local area.

Partnership agencies in Wiltshire have a good understanding of the benefits of working together in partnership to tackle and prevent ASB. Regular monthly multi-agency anti-social behaviour case management meetings are held across the county to agree on the most effective actions to address the behaviour of individuals who have referred due to their anti-social behaviour. Task and Finish Groups are convened to address problems raised by the community relating to public spaces, car parks and where general concerns about anti-social behaviour have been raised, but no individuals identified. In order to ensure a joined up approach to community issues, members of the Community Safety Partnership are continually working to identify new working practices to further improve the excellent 'partnership working' that already takes place across the County on a daily basis.

8. PRIORITIES OF THE STRATEGY

The strategy supports, encourages and initiates a range of actions and initiatives that will directly address anti-social behaviour by using a victim focused, evidence based problem-solving approach. The aim is to tackle anti-social behaviour through Prevention, Intervention, Enforcement and Reassurance.

8.1. Victim Focus - The strategy supports, encourages and initiates a range of actions and initiatives that will directly address anti-social behaviour by using a victim focused, evidence based problem-solving approach. The aim is to tackle anti-social behaviour through Prevention, Intervention, Enforcement and Reassurance.

8.2. Prevention - In order to prevent anti-social behaviour, information is required to indicate what the problems are, where and when it is happening, and who are the perpetrators and who is affected. To ensure that we are able to take effective, targeted action we are committed to:

1. Improve information sharing between agencies to deliver a co-ordinated approach
2. Develop an effective system for the production of Problem Profiles to provide a clear picture of ASB incidents and to identify priority.
3. Co-ordinate and tackle reports and individual cases of ASB effectively in partnership
4. Provide robust management information (MI) into Partnership Monitoring and Reporting process.
5. Develop ASB Toolkit for community engagement and involvement in ASB prevention.
6. Design out Crime

8.3. Intervention - Sustainable effective action on anti-social behaviour requires early and targeted interventions. We are committed to deliver early proportionate interventions to:

1. Tackle ASB that affects the environment and our communities
2. To provide support for young people and families who are victims or perpetrators of anti-social behaviour
3. To tackle alcohol related ASB, by identifying and implementing support for individuals who mis-use alcohol.
4. To work with the Voluntary Sector to engage with the 'hard to reach' members of the community who are affected by anti-social behaviour.

8.4. Enforcement - The partner agencies have a range of Powers and Tools available to them to protect the community from ASB. We are committed to using enforcement in a balanced and proportionate manner. We will

1. Ensure relevant powers and tools are used appropriately by all Partners
2. Adopt a tiered approach to the use of informal controls and enforcement measures

8.5. Reassurance - Keeping communities informed about what is being done to tackle ASB helps to reduce perception and to promote community cohesion. We are committed to

1. Reduce signal crimes i.e. vandalism/criminal damage/'broken window syndrome' and vehicle related anti-social behaviour
2. To improve the local perception of anti-social behaviour through regular, accessible communication to the public.
3. Working with the local community forums, such as Community Area Boards, Town and Parish Councils and Residents Associations to receive and provide information about local anti-social behaviour issues.

9. IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERY

The implementation of the strategic priorities will be delivered through cross-departmental and multi-agency working. Detailed actions and contributions are set out in the ASB Implementation Plan with details of the lead agency responsible for coordinating delivery. A multi-agency partnership group, the Wiltshire Anti-social Behaviour Reduction Group, has been set up to deliver and monitor the plan and outcomes.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Wiltshire Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Implementation Plan is an 'organic' document which will be subject to regular review and reflection in order to:

- Monitor progress against targets and objectives
- Assess performance against in comparison against other areas
- Understand whether actions and activities are achieving the required outcomes, and if not, why not.
- Establish the overall impact and effectiveness of the strategy
- Incorporate new legislation or government directives, as well as reflecting local need to ensure continued effectiveness.
- Regular reporting on National Indicators relating to LAA and Law targets.
- Monitor victim satisfaction with service and support received by Police and Local Authority.

11. ACCOUNTABILITY

The Wiltshire Community Safety Partnership Executive has the responsibility to reduce crime and disorder including anti-social behaviour. The Partnership will provide the overarching governance for the Wiltshire ASB Reduction Strategy, whilst recognizing the role of Wiltshire Council as the Partnership Lead for reducing actual and perceived anti-social behaviour.

Implementation and delivery of the strategy and plan will be the responsibility of individual agencies through a joined-up approach. The partner agencies recognize their obligations to promote race, equality, cohesion, and diversity in the method, quality and style of service delivery.