

Briefing Note

Title: Anti-Social Behaviour**Date: 07.11.2023****Intended Audience:**Internal Partner organisation Public Confidential

Purpose or recommendation

To provide an overview of the approach to addressing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Wolverhampton.

Definition

The ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014 defines ASB as:

“Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person; conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person’s occupation of residential premises; or conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person”.

This broad definition means that a wide range of behaviours can be considered ASB, including neighbour disputes, street drinking, aggressive begging, intimidating behaviour, environmental issues and nuisance vehicles. Due to the scope of the definition, there are a number of different mechanisms utilised to respond to ASB, depending on the behaviour to be addressed.

The definition also means that what is considered ASB can, to some extent, be subjective. This is because residents’ thresholds for what they consider to be ‘annoyance’ will likely significantly differ. For this reason, when addressing ASB it is important to be proportionate in responses and also ensure that any action is supported by activity to increase community cohesion and tolerance where necessary.

Wolverhampton Approach

Wolverhampton is committed to embedding a partnership response to preventing and reducing ASB in the City. Vital to this approach is ensuring that intervention activity is data driven and informed by the needs of our communities. Therefore, partnerships regularly share data and information relating to ASB, trends, patterns and areas of concern.

There are various services and agencies working to address incidents of ASB in Wolverhampton. These agencies work in partnership to ensure that the most effective response to ASB is utilised, including tools and powers from the ASB, Crime and Policing Act (2014).

In addition to dealing with individual cases, partnership work takes place across the city to address high demand perpetrators, locations and themes around ASB and provide activity to prevent ASB from occurring.

Enforcement

Depending on the nature of ASB, there are various enforcement mechanisms which can be utilised to manage the behaviour of perpetrators – this may include community protection warnings, community protection notices or criminal prosecution.

The table below summarises key enforcement activity across the partnership.

	City of Wolverhampton Council	West Midlands Police	Wolverhampton Homes
Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions	X	X	X
Criminal Behaviour Orders		X	
Closure Notices & Orders	X	X	X
Community Protection Warnings & Notices	X	X	
Public Space Protection Orders	X		
Anti-social behaviour case reviews	X		
Wider enforcement around ASB related issues (i.e., fly tipping & statutory nuisance)	X		
Additional crime linked to ASB (i.e., harassment, hate crime etc.)		X	

Support for Victims

As well as enforcement action there are a number of mechanisms to directly support victims of ASB in Wolverhampton:

- The locally funded **ASB team** support victims of ASB. The ASB team will either provide advice at the first point of contact or refer the matter to an officer or the Tenancy Management team for investigation. They will also signpost to any other organisations who may be able to assist.
- **Mediation services** are available in Wolverhampton when this may be an appropriate response to resolve or reduce ASB. Mediation helps people to better understand the nature and the causes of a conflict and empower them to manage it and generate peaceful resolution. It is a powerful alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process that uniquely allows people to remain in control in difficult situations and to contribute to their own agreements, improving the circumstances of everyone involved.
- **West Midlands Police** can offer support to victims of ASB. They identify the level of risk (using THRIVE+). A contact plan will then be developed to identify next steps. Depending

on the nature of the case this may include visits, partnership response or a referral to other agencies. Victims will be updated regarding any action taken and every contact with a victim will generate a new THRIVE+ plan.

- **Victim Support** are funded in Wolverhampton to support victims of ASB as well as crime. Victim Support will provide victims with a range of support including advice and guidance, longer term emotional and practical support, personal safety services and advocacy.

Preventative Activity

As well as utilising enforcement and providing support for victims of anti-social behaviour, a range of prevention activity also takes place across the city. Much of this activity is a result of proactive partnership work to attract funding to the city and successful funding bids.

- City of Wolverhampton Council commission **city wide detached youth work** to engage with young people within the city, this is enhanced by Safer Wolverhampton Partnership who commission targeted outreach – the aim of which is to engage and support young people and communities vulnerable to becoming a victim or perpetrator of crime, exploitation and/or ASB.
- Wolverhampton's Youth Offending Team is taking part in the **Turnaround** youth early intervention programme led by the Ministry of Justice. It aims to improve outcomes for children and young people who do not currently meet the threshold for statutory support but who may still be at risk of youth offending. This includes young people who may have come to the attention of authorities for ASB.
- **Step together** is a programme funded by the Violence Reduction Partnership in Wolverhampton which is a school chaperone service. This initiative sees youth workers deployed in targeted areas when young people are leaving school to prevent anti-social behaviour, ensure that young people get home safely and positively engage young people.
- Wolverhampton Local Policing Authority have invested in four **Early Help Officers** in Wolverhampton who are allocated to complete targeted work within primary schools to really focus on supporting children of primary school age within school settings as well as within the home and collaboratively with the Strengthening Family Hubs. Alongside these officers are five **School Intervention and Prevention Officers**, who are allocated to complete targeted work within secondary schools, PRU's, colleges, alternative provisions, special education settings, as well as supporting young people of that target age range outside of school, within the home and collaboratively with the Strengthening Family Hubs and key partners.
- **DIVERT** is a joint endeavour to promote the diversion of young people away from the criminal justice system using a Joint Decision-Making Panel. The panel aims to provide a

multi-agency process to agree appropriate outcomes for referred young people. It allows for a holistic assessment of young people's needs and the delivery of tailored interventions that promote positive opportunities as well as effectively preventing reoffending. Wolverhampton are the first in the region to implement this approach to diversion. To this end it is truly innovative and embedding the core principles of Child First Offender Second, whilst ensuring the victim voices are heard throughout the process.

- **Anti- Social Behaviour Pilot/ Op Eternity** is home office funded and provides additional investment to increase the presence of 'authority figures' within areas disproportionately affected by ASB.
- A successful bid was submitted in partnership by Safer Wolverhampton Partnership and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to **Safer Streets round 4** to tackle increasing levels of ASB within Wolverhampton City Centre. The project received significant investment to increase the presence of police officers within the city, engage young people in positive activity, enhance the safe space provided within Wolverhampton City Centre on Friday and Saturday nights and engage with off-licenses to tackle street drinking.
- Wolverhampton has a significant **offer for young people during the school holidays**. This supports to engage young people in positive activity and prevent them becoming engaged in ASB. Activities are coordinated via a range of funding sources, including #YES, Holiday Activity fund (Department for Education), Safer Wolverhampton Partnership and the Violence Reduction Partnership.

Principles for Delivery - ASB Operational Group

The Home Office Anti-Social Behaviour Strategic Board has developed a set of national principles which seek to describe a consistent approach to understanding and addressing antisocial behaviour in local communities.

The principles are not intended to fetter local decision making but rather to act as a guide in seeking to deliver the best possible outcomes for victims of antisocial behaviour:

1. Victims should be encouraged to report antisocial behaviour and expect to be taken seriously. They should have clear ways to report, have access to help and support to recover, and be given the opportunity to choose restorative approaches to tackling antisocial behaviour.
2. Agencies will have clear and transparent processes to ensure that victims can report antisocial behaviour concerns, can understand how the matter will be investigated and are kept well informed of progress once a report is made.
3. Agencies and practitioners will work across boundaries to identify, assess and tackle antisocial behaviour and its underlying causes. Referral pathways should be clearly set out

between services and published locally. This includes pathways for the anti-social behaviour case review and health services.

4. The public's antisocial behaviour concerns should always be considered both nationally and locally in strategic needs assessments for community safety. Best practice should be shared through a network of antisocial behaviour experts within each community safety partnership, each policing area and nationally.
5. Adults and children who exhibit antisocial behaviour should have the opportunity to take responsibility for their behaviour and repair the harm caused by it. Agencies should deliver appropriate interventions, which may include criminal justice options, based on the seriousness, risks and vulnerabilities of the case.

A multi-agency operational group has been established within Wolverhampton to begin self-assessment against these principles and develop an action plan to ensure that local delivery is in line with best practice.

Members of the group include West Midlands Police; Community Safety; Landlord Services; Wolverhampton Homes; Wolverhampton Youth Offending Team; Public Protection team; Homelessness Team.

Key current activity of the group includes:

- Oversight of delivery and commissioning of key services, as outlined above. Multi-agency oversight ensures that activity is aligned and prevents duplication.
- Update of websites across the partnership to share consistent information about how to report ASB, what will happen when a report is made and how agencies work together to address and prevent ASB.
- Mapping of restorative justice approaches currently utilised within the city to ensure that pathways to such approaches are promoted and utilised by a wide range of professionals.
- Regularly reviewing data to identify hotspots, trends and themes. This contributes to proactively identify, assess and tackle ASB and its underlying causes.
- Increasing awareness of pathways to support across communities and a wide range of professionals within the City, particularly when ASB is driven by an underlying vulnerability i.e., Domestic abuse, alcohol or substance misuse or mental health conditions.