



Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2010 - 2011



West Mercia
POLICE



West Mercia Police

Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy

Introduction from ACC Simon Edens and Robin Bennett

This strategy is designed to help us improve the way we deal with anti-social behaviour. There is clear evidence of excellent local policing activity throughout our divisions yet we face new challenges - to improve the service we provide to “victims” of ASB and to work even closer with our partners.

The correct and timely identification of people facing the highest levels of risk presents one of the most important challenges. Success in this area will help ensure we provide the right response to those who need our help most.

We work closely with our partners and this provides a solid foundation for delivering this strategy. The relationship with local authorities is particularly significant: we are jointly assessed with them in how we deal with local crime and antisocial behaviour within our ‘confidence’ target.

Anti-social behaviour harms individuals and communities. West Mercia Police is committed to protecting people from harm and providing a service that leaves people feeling satisfied and confident; our staff are committed to making the difference. We have developed this strategy so that we all can make the difference for those who are suffering from anti-social behaviour.

ACC Simon Edens
West Mercia Police

West Mercia is a safe place to live and work yet consultation with our communities confirms that anti-social behaviour can be a problem anywhere. Good policing is crucial to prevent such problems occurring or escalating and to deal effectively with those who engage in the sort of behaviour that can damage the quality of people’s lives.

Dealing effectively with anti-social behaviour is at the heart of good police performance. I am pleased that people’s perceptions of anti-social behaviour here are relatively low and have been recently declining. Their confidence that West Mercia Police is dealing with local crime and anti-social behaviour is improving.

West Mercia Police Authority is committed to helping the force improve its performance and welcomes this strategy. We recognise that the investment in local policing means we are very well placed to deliver a consistently good service to all our communities. We recognise too that meeting the needs of individuals and communities who are at risk from anti-social behaviour needs a partnership response and we will actively support the development of better partnership working.

Mr Robin Bennett
West Mercia Police Authority

Statement of Intent

West Mercia Police is committed to providing a policing service that secures and maintains high levels of satisfaction and confidence including the effective tackling of ASB. We will achieve this through the consistent delivery of a first class policing service that meets the needs of individuals and communities and providing a service that people value.

April 2009 witnessed the launch of West Mercia Police's new policing strategy which succinctly defines our mission as "**Serving-Protecting-Making the Difference**". The strategy seeks to achieve the following outcomes:-

- The public have confidence in us and express satisfaction with our policing service
- Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour remain low
- Our communities feel safe

These outcomes are complementary to the Police Confidence Target that asks people:-

"How much would you agree or disagree that the police and local council are dealing with the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area?"

This measure elevates anti-social behaviour (ASB) to an equivalent level of strategic importance as crime and West Mercia Police will appropriately replicate crime investigation processes and performance management frameworks for ASB. Leadership in this area will foster the development of a culture that addresses ASB as a strategic priority for the force and ensure our actions are complementary to other programmes and reviews.

The Policing Pledge and the continuing emphasis that the PACT process places on ASB, further underlines the importance for West Mercia to meet the expectations of our public.

This Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy is consistent with our aim to be a truly citizen focused organisation. It outlines a framework of activity aimed at developing greater public confidence in local policing, whilst recognising that this cannot be achieved without the commitment and professionalism of our people and partners and the empowered involvement of our communities.

West Mercia is committed to providing an excellent consistent standard of Local Policing across the force area, which is visible, accessible and responsive. We are also committed to protecting individuals and communities and we are particularly determined to help those who are vulnerable. In order to achieve these priorities we have developed this clear strategy for effectively tackling anti-social behaviour in partnership with other key agencies. This strategy will provide our staff with clarity regarding our drive towards achieving safer communities for all and also incorporate our action plan:-

- Focus on a partnership approach
- Focus on offenders
- Focus on victims and in particular vulnerable victims
- Communicate effectively
- Ensure accountability through performance management

Defining Anti-Social Behaviour

An individual's understanding of what constitutes anti-social behaviour is determined by a series of factors including context, location, community tolerance and quality of life expectations. What may be considered anti-social behaviour to one person or community may be seen as acceptable behaviour to another. It is fundamentally a subjective interpretation. As a consequence it is difficult to create a single definition of anti-social behaviour.

In its broadest sense and for the purposes of this strategy it is described as:-

Behaviour by an individual or group that results in:-

- another party feeling personally threatened,
- creates a public nuisance, or
- has a detrimental impact upon the environment and thereby has a detrimental effect upon the quality of life of an individual or the community as a whole.

The identification and protection of Vulnerable Victims

One of the key challenges is the identification of vulnerable victims from the overall volume of incidents reported to us. A common sense and pragmatic definition of 'vulnerable' will apply, mirroring the approach taken within the Policing Pledge where individual members of staff apply an everyday interpretation to the word. Examples of vulnerability may include mental or physical ability or the frequency of being a victim of anti-social behaviour.

Designation of an appropriate vulnerability level, which will determine police and partner responses, will be facilitated around an assessment which considers:-

- Vulnerability
- Volume
- Frequency
- Scale
- Severity
- Harm

Experience has demonstrated the value of risk management plans within domestic violence and hate crime investigations. We will replicate this effective practice by utilising similar principles for vulnerable ASB victims entering identified victims and appropriate response onto our risk management database.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in Partnership

Not all reports of anti-social behaviour are made directly to the Police with calls often made to local authorities, registered social landlords and other third parties. Calls to the Police represent only a fraction of the total and we will therefore aim to increase public confidence in our ability to effectively tackle anti-social behaviour in partnership with other key agencies.

We need to effectively share information and co-ordinate partnership responses in enforcing action against offenders, supporting victims of ASB and improving environments to prevent ASB occurring.

Our overall aim is to demonstrate to our communities that West Mercia Police and its partners are effective and capable of reducing both the perceptions and reality of anti-social behaviour. We will work to achieve, year on year, reductions in anti-social behaviour and in particular reduce repeat calls for service. We will also strive to continually increase the public's confidence regarding how well West Mercia Police and its partners effectively tackle anti-social behaviour.

We will measure our success in tackling anti-social behaviour through analysing a wide range of survey and satisfaction data. We will hold meaningful dialogue with our communities and ensure we measure achievement based on the widest range of sources.

Our Approach

Clear and robust processes are required to effectively tackle anti-social behaviour. We must adopt an approach which ensures that each individual call for service is treated appropriately. We will apply a consistent set of service standards which will be quality assured. We will therefore:-

- **Effectively tackle anti-social behaviour in partnership**
Ensure that all relevant partners record, share and appropriately action reports of ASB and take co-ordinated actions to address **offenders** behaviour, identify and support **victims** (particularly those who are vulnerable) and deliver hot spot interventions.
- **Communicate effectively**
Provide regular information to residents on what action is being taken to effectively tackle anti-social behaviour.
- **Ensure accountability through performance management**
We will design performance measurement tools that assess the real difference our efforts make within our communities.

The table overleaf outlines in more detail specific activity.

“Effectively tackling anti-social behaviour in partnership”

Focus on a partnership approach	Focus on offenders	Focus on victims and in particular vulnerable victims	Communicate effectively	Ensure accountability through performance management
<p>We will ensure that :-</p> <p>We work with all relevant partners to record, share and appropriately action reports of ASB and take co-ordinated actions to address offenders behaviour, identify and support victims (particularly those who are vulnerable) and deliver hot spot interventions.</p>	<p>We will ensure that :-</p> <p>We take action that is aimed at long term sustainable solutions. In appropriate cases we will seek Criminal Justice resolutions but we will also work with offenders to change behaviour, utilise community restorative approaches and provide support to change</p>	<p>We will ensure that :-</p> <p>We will provide support, guidance and protection to people that report anti-social behaviour including reducing the threat of intimidation or harm from those who would seek to frustrate justice</p>	<p>We will ensure that :-</p> <p>Those persons affected are updated and kept informed as to what has been achieved. We will ensure that communities regularly receive information about action being taken and outcomes from previous activity. We will have a transparent and accessible process to express dissatisfaction with responses to ASB.</p>	<p>We will ensure that :-</p> <p>We will design performance measurement tools that assess the real difference our efforts make within our communities. We establish clear performance goals and seek to increase confidence and satisfaction in how we deal with anti-social behaviour and reduce the number of repeat and vulnerable victims. We will design performance measurement processes that tell us how successful our efforts have been.</p>
<p>To Achieve this we will :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with partner agencies including CDRP's a set of joint Service Standards to include clarity around definition and agency responsibilities. • Share data with other key agencies regarding ASB to ensure we have the most detailed understanding of issues and then achieve solutions in partnership. • Develop multi-agency threat assessment tools and risk management plans. • Support Neighbourhood Management and engage in multi-agency tasking and co-ordinating to ensure the resources of stakeholder and key partners are most appropriately and efficiently deployed 	<p>To Achieve this we will :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In each case having considered all aggravating and mitigating factors including the views of victims determine the most appropriate action against offenders which may include traditional CJS outcomes, other out of court outcomes or Restorative Justice. • Develop processes which enable perpetrators of ASB to recognise the consequences of their behaviour and in doing so aim to change that behaviour • Ensure that perpetrators have access to support to help change behaviour • Work closely with Youth Service Providers to ensure young persons who commit ASB receive appropriate interventions and support where appropriate • Use the full range of legislative powers (including ASBO and ASB Closure orders) to resolve the most serious cases of ASB • Take robust action in partnership with the Crown Prosecution Service against breaches of ASBO providing prosecution files of evidence that are comprehensive and of a high standard • Use education through schools as a method of preventing young people from committing or becoming victims of ASB 	<p>To Achieve this we will :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish robust and accurate recording procedures for initial receipt of calls for service • Implement rigorous procedures for undertaking initial dynamic risk assessment of calls for service • Professionally assess each incident and select the most appropriate and effective initial response to include the identification of the most vulnerable. • Cross reference previous calls for service relating to the location / victim / offender and use this information to tailor our response • Agree with those who call for service a plan for effectively tackling ASB incidents • Provide a named point of contact within the appropriate Local Policing Team who will have responsibility for managing each call for service • Support victims and witnesses of ASB and protect communities in partnership with Victim Support Services • Put in place special measures to protect vulnerable victims and witnesses in ASB cases that are referred to the Criminal Justice System • Proactively identify those persons within our communities that are most at risk of becoming ASB victims and put measures in place to safeguard them • Train our staff to recognise and deal effectively with ASB by understanding the emotional impact it creates, identify vulnerability and intimidation factors and respond accordingly. 	<p>To Achieve this we will :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that Local Policing Teams provide regular updates regarding efforts to address ASB using methods appropriate to each community • Listen to what our communities and victims tell us about how they want to see us tackle ASB • Provide our communities with locally relevant information about Criminal Justice System outcomes (Justice Seen Justice Done) • Develop a communications strategy (internal and external) to promote our service standards and wider information about ASB covering the media and other marketing opportunities. • Work closely with partner agencies to jointly brand and publicise information and activities relating to tackling ASB • Ensure that all reports of dissatisfaction with service are responded to within 24 hours in accordance with the Policing Pledge • Provide a named point of contact who will deal with each case of dissatisfaction 	<p>To Achieve this we will :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage our performance through measuring outputs and activity, reductions in the incidence of ASB, the satisfaction of victims and confidence of the public that with partners we are tackling ASB • Understand how best to tackle ASB through examining best practice and understanding what works and what does not • Consider the emotional impact that ASB has on those affected by it and use this to direct our activity • Seek our communities views on our efforts and use this information to shape future action

Our initial approach at the attendance of an ASB incident can be concisely described as the West Mercia AEIOU of ASB:-

The AEIOU of ASB

A

Attend and Assess

E

Engage with all parties

I

Investigate

O

Organisational memory

U

Update systems

It is essential that anti-social behaviour is dealt with in a professional and thorough manner. Use this aide-memoire to ensure you don't forget something!

A – Attend and Assess. Attend the scene – police have been called for a reason. Assess the situation paying particular attention to the victim/caller – are they vulnerable in any way? Consider age, disability, hate crime, etc, and how this may increase a person's vulnerability to ASB.

E – Engage with all parties – this includes the caller, victim, offenders, and witnesses. Use this opportunity to provide reassurance. Can other agencies or departments help you? Is the Local Policing Team aware?

I – Investigate as if it were a crime. Consider all lines of enquiry – witnesses, CCTV, house to house, etc. Can you take positive action? Arrest, CR, PND, Report for summons, etc.

O – Organisational Memory – have police attended this address/location before? What happened last time? Have you asked for VPI? Is there any information that could assist you – an offender with an ASBO for example.

U – Update Systems. Submit appropriate paperwork (CO1, NIR, full update on OIS, etc) – this will help us in the future. 'ASNT' (or 'ATNS'!) is no longer acceptable. Remember to record the victim, location and any offenders or suspects. If you require a letter sent to a suspect please tag OIS or Encounter with 'ASB'.

