

1. Please provide details of your organisation and its role in address anti-social behaviour

The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU) is a partnership team comprised of staff from both Northampton Borough Council and Northamptonshire Police. The unit is responsible for tackling persistent anti-social behaviour within the Borough and for coordinating a multi-agency approach to achieve this. Providing practical and emotional support for victims and witnesses of anti-social behaviour, which is tailored to their needs and requirements, is central to the role of the unit. The unit also provides training, information, advice and support to partners which include:

Northampton Partnership Homes

Northamptonshire Police

Northampton Borough Council departments including Neighbourhood Wardens and Environmental Protection

Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Youth Offending Service

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service

Public Health

Northampton Retail Crime Initiative

Sunflower Centre

Probation and BeNCH Community Rehabilitation Company

Voice (Victim Support)

Witness Service

Crown Prosecution Service & HM Courts (Magistrates, Crown & County)

Registered Social Landlords

Third sector organisations including S2S (CRI), C2C, Hope Centre, Bridge Programme, NAASH, Service Six, Women's Aid, Aquarius, CAN.

The definition of anti-social behaviour is defined within section 2 (1) of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014:

- a) "Conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person"
- b) "Conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises"
- c) "Conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person"

Types of anti-social behaviour that the unit deal with includes nuisance neighbours, harassment, abusive, insulting intimidating and threatening behaviour, misuse of vehicles, street drinking, begging, sex working, criminal damage and graffiti.

2. What strategies and policies do you have in place for addressing anti-social behaviour?

The ASBU operates in line with the below strategies and policies:

Northamptonshire Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Strategy (2015-18)

Northampton Community Safety Partnership Plan (2015-16)

Northamptonshire's Police and Crime Plan (2014-17)

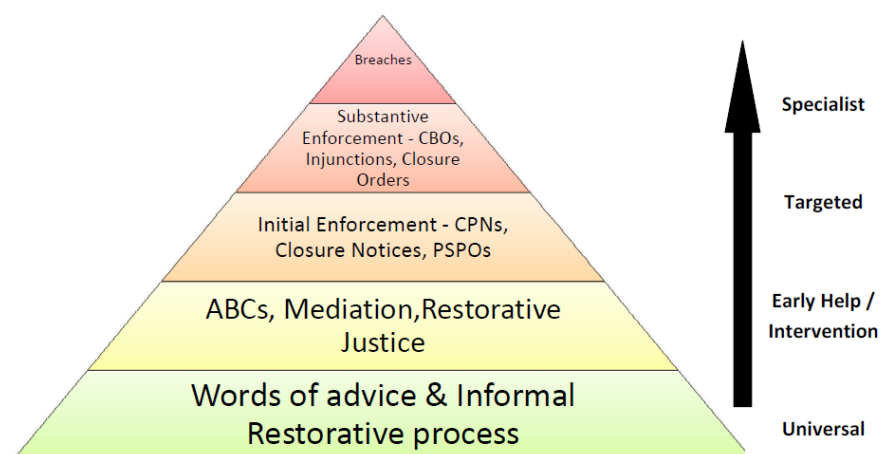
Northampton ASBU Data Exchange Agreement and Service Level Agreements

Information Sharing Agreement between Northamptonshire Police and Partner Organisations

3. What specific practices and measures do you currently undertake to address/tackle anti-social behaviour?

The primary role of the ASBU is provide a coordinated partnership approach to tackle anti-social behaviour using a staged process of interventions and enforcement tools, where appropriate, as indicated in the diagram below*.

The unit receives referrals from the Police, Housing Providers, Neighbourhood Wardens and Environmental Protection for named individuals who have failed to engage with those services and who persistently cause anti-social behaviour. Once a referral is accepted by the unit, a Case Manager in the team is allocated who will develop an action plan, in partnership with other agencies involved, to address the behaviour and underlying causes. Referrals are also discussed with all relevant partners on a monthly basis at the Northampton Anti-Social Behaviour Group meeting (NASBAG).



*Intervention Pyramid (Northamptonshire Anti-Social Behaviour Reduction Strategy 2015-18)

4. Do you have specific budget/resources/funding in relation to addressing anti-social behaviour, if so please provide further details.

Northampton Borough Council hosts the ASBU and funds three full time posts within the unit. There are a further two Police posts with the unit; one Police Sergeant and one Police Constable. In addition, there is a budget of £1000 to assist with legal fees for Injunctions to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance (IPNA's).

5. Are the current partnership arrangements for tackling anti-social behaviour sufficient and if not where are the gaps?

The ASBU was established in 2003 and since then has developed significant links with its partner agencies in order to successfully tackle anti-social behaviour within the town. The unit receives a number of referrals for individuals committing anti-social behaviour where there are concerns that the individual may be suffering from mental health problems. It is a challenging process to link these individuals with the appropriate mental health services for a variety of reasons. In order to address this it would be beneficial to have an identified point of contact within mental health services to enable an increased level of information sharing and provide a more streamlined referral process.

Legislation reform in 2014 provided the ASBU with the increased flexibility needed to deal with cases referred to them. It has become apparent that one of the barriers to utilising this flexible approach relates to the availability of adequate Court time for cases to be heard and resolved at the earliest opportunity. We are finding an increased number of cases are adjourned because of the lack of availability of court time which ultimately impacts upon the victims and witnesses in these cases.

6. Do you feel there is adequate co-ordination between agencies regarding dealing with anti-social behaviour? If not how could it be improved?

The co-ordination between agencies with regard to Anti-Social Behaviour takes place at both a strategic and local level from the Community Safety Partnership board and officers group to working groups that have been established to develop plans to tackle area specific issues including the town centre tasking group and frequent flyers (A&E) meeting. The street drinkers, beggars and rough sleepers group was also set up in 2011 to bring the statutory and third sector organisations together who have ongoing involvement with the identified individuals in order to monitor their behaviour and where possible enable the most appropriate agency to assist or intervene. Northampton Borough Council are currently in the process of developing a new multi-agency rough sleeper's strategy with the first workshop taking place at the beginning of February 2016 with a view to improving co-ordination between organisations involved.

The introduction of ECINS, a cloud based multi-agency ASB case management system, in 2014 has resulted in a more effective approach to sharing of information between and across agencies, providing a joined up approach in referrals, case management/building, resulting in swifter responses and outcomes. However, the use of the ECINS system is piecemeal across agencies, with some officers using it more effectively and regularly than others. If this was utilised more widely by relevant organisations it would go even further in delivering responses and positive outcomes.

7. How does anti-social behaviour impact upon you/organisation?

It is the core business of the ASBU to address anti-social behaviour issues within the Borough. Failure to do so successfully would lead to a loss in public confidence for Northampton Borough Council, Northamptonshire Police and partner agencies.

8. What do you think could be done to ensure effective strategic and operational links are made to tackle anti-social behaviour, or improve, on a town scale?

Please see response at question 6.

9. Please provide details of the enforcement powers that you have in respect of anti-social behaviour

The diagram provided in response to question 3 outlines the framework of intervention and enforcement powers available to the ASBU. Once a referral is accepted by the ASBU, initial interventions include a warning letter to the alleged perpetrator, verbal warnings, mediation, restorative justice practices and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs).

In relation to beggars within the town a process has been adopted between the ASBU and Police which revolves around the use of yellow (first warning) and red card (conditional caution) warning system. When a red card is given to an individual for begging related issues they are given a conditional caution, lasting for three months, which requires them to engage with drug and alcohol support agencies. If this process isn't adhered to by the individual then they are summonsed to court for the offence.

Should the above measures be unsuccessful for any type of referral then the following enforcement tools are available to the unit:

Community Protection Notice warning letter

Community Protection Notice

Injunctions to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance (IPNAs)

Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO)

Closure Powers

The ASBU also supports the Police in relation to dispersal powers and works with housing providers (NPH, Social Landlords and private landlords) to assist with tenancy enforcement.

10. Do you have the resources to enforce the powers that you have? Please explain

As a unit we have sufficient resources within house at this time to be able to utilise the enforcement powers available, however, within the current financial climate we are aware of the pressures faced by all agencies and organisations involved in tackling anti-social behaviour within the town. One particular pinch point is within the criminal justice system and cases being dealt with expeditiously (i.e. allocation of available court time). This ultimately impacts upon the outcomes of cases and the victims and witnesses involved in these.

Some of the most complex cases held by the ASBU revolve around neighbour/community issues which often cause considerable distress to the victims and witnesses involved. Due to

the nature of these cases there is often not a criminal case for us to be able to attach a Criminal Behaviour Order application to and so the only option available under new legislation would be to apply for an Injunction to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance (IPNA). Any breaches of an IPNA would have a cost implication upon the ASBU and ultimately NBC.

11. Do you have information regarding the nature of the psychoactive substances markets that you are able to inform the scrutiny panel of?

Based on local knowledge of Northampton, the ASBU are currently aware of two outlets for psychoactive substances. The ASBU served a Community Protection Notice warning letter in relation to one of these premises in February 2015 due to the volume of people attending the shop and congregating outside causing disturbances within the street prior to the premises opening. Since that time, complaints regarding the issues surrounding the shop have ceased.

12. Please can you provide details of any health consequences of using psychoactive substances

We are aware of individuals who are/have been referred to the unit who have taken psychoactive substances, often in combination with alcohol and or other drugs. The outcome of which tends to be either unconsciousness and severe illness or hyper active behaviour which ultimately impacts upon public services (ambulance and police) and on public perception.

13. Do you have any suggestions on how, as partners, we can improve our approach in addressing anti-social behaviour?

Please see responses within other questions.

14. What do you think is the key contributing factor to anti-social behaviour across Northampton?

Based on referrals to the ASBU and having worked with individuals committing anti-social behaviour the key contributing factor appears to be a combination of mental health issues or illnesses alongside the misuse of alcohol, illicit drugs and psychoactive substances (legal highs).

15. Do you have further information regarding the impact of anti-social behaviour on the town of which you would like to inform the scrutiny panel?

The ASBU receives referrals for individuals involved in a wide range of anti-social behaviours. Some of the most visible and challenging individuals to engage with are rough sleepers, beggars and street drinkers. These behaviours are predominantly seen within the town centre, although are Borough wide issues, and have had an impact upon the public's perception of anti-social behaviour within the town. Rough sleeping in isolation is not classified as anti-social behaviour, however, it is recognised that people perceive it to be and as such a new rough sleeper's strategy is being developed by Northampton Borough Council and is a process that the ASBU are involved with.