

Exploration of local variations in the use of anti-social behaviour tools and powers

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This study examined the differences and similarities between Crime and Disorder Partnerships (CDRPs) in their use of anti-social behaviour (ASB) interventions, focusing on their experiences of the process of: implementing interventions; local and national influences; and the perceived effectiveness of interventions. The information was collected through an online survey of ASB co-ordinators in CDRPs and a series of focus groups with ASB practitioners in local areas conducted by Ipsos MORI.

Perceptions and the local agenda

The research highlighted the key part played by the local community in setting the agenda for ASB interventions, illustrating the need for local agencies to inform communities about what is being done locally in tackling ASB and for the Home Office to address perceptions of levels of ASB – the Home Office is working with some local areas to draw out promising approaches in informing communities about action to tackle ASB.

The use of tools and powers

Most practitioners felt content with, and well-informed about, the range of powers available to them, although some saw a need for an intervention that ‘bridged the gap’ between the non-compulsion of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and the strictures of ASBOs. But practitioners mostly wanted a consolidation of the Government’s approach, with an indication of the future policy direction.

Practitioners commonly reported a tiered approach to implementing interventions to tackle ASB, with an initial focus on preventative, supportive interventions, working up to a multi-agency enforcement approach.

The areas involved in the research used an array of supportive interventions, but there were concerns about the accessibility of support services for adults.

Partnership working and information sharing

While practitioners valued local flexibility, they saw national sharing of good practice as key to ensuring that good and innovative work that is being carried out across the country is used to inform policy and practice developments. Some practitioners thought that an effective practice guide illustrating a range of case study examples would be a useful tool to front-line staff, while others pressed for guidelines to assist them in making informed decisions about how to most effectively use the interventions.

Multi-agency working was seen as vital for dealing effectively with ASB, but barriers to the sharing of information were reported, in particular between statutory and non-statutory bodies. Some practitioners wanted guidelines on information-sharing protocols and establishing effective partnerships, especially with those agencies currently outside of many ASB partnerships.

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Keywords

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