

“How many areas have operational evening curfews for young people. I would also like to know the names of these areas”. Your request has been handled in accordance with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.”

Table 1: Top line results on the number of areas designated, number of people dispersed and number of under 16s taken home between January 2004 and June 2005 inclusive.

| Force | Number of areas designated | Number of people dispersed | Number of under 16s taken home |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Avon and Somerset | 23 | 38 | |
| Bedfordshire | 27 | | |
| Cambridgeshire | 23 | | |
| Cheshire | 1 | | |
| City of London | | | |
| Cleveland | 19 | 1369 | |
| Cumbria | 1 | 58 | 10 |
| Derbyshire | 22 | 1277 | 111 |
| Devon and Cornwall | 26 | 453 | 3 |
| Dorset | 20 | 24 | |
| Durham | 1 | 21 | 24 |
| Dyfed Powys | | | |
| Essex | 20 | 430 | 8 |
| Gloucestershire | | | |
| Greater Manchester | 31 | 421 | |
| Gwent | 3 | 3 | |
| Hampshire | 44 | 885 | 14 |
| Hertfordshire | 19 | 90 | |
| Humberside | 13 | 512 | |
| Kent | 56 | 113 | 3 |
| Lancashire | 18 | | |
| Leicestershire | 24 | 474 | 32 |
| Lincolnshire | 4 | 51 | 5 |
| Merseyside | 45 | | |
| Metropolitan Police | | | |
| Norfolk | 12 | 190 | |
| North Wales | 16 | 2 | |
| North Yorkshire | 1 | 58 | 3 |
| Northamptonshire | 39 | 1689 | 64 |
| Northumbria | 1 | 18 | |
| Nottinghamshire | 40 | 1532 | |
| South Wales | 2 | 16 | 4 |

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------|---------------|------------|
| South Yorkshire | 12 | 196 | 18 |
| Staffordshire | 19 | 273 | 17 |
| Suffolk | 3 | 70 | 13 |
| Surrey | 23 | | |
| Sussex | 25 | 497 | 92 |
| Thames Valley | 6 | 58 | |
| Warwickshire | 19 | 299 | 12 |
| West Mercia | | | |
| West Midlands | 123 | 2814 | 63 |
| West Yorkshire | 16 | 434 | 24 |
| Wiltshire | 12 | 10 | |
| Total | 809 | 14,375 | 520 |

New powers to disperse intimidating groups were introduced by Part 4 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. Part 4 created a power for a senior police officer to designate an area with the local authority's agreement where there is persistent anti-social behaviour and a problem with groups causing intimidation, harassment, alarm or distress. In these designated areas police and community support officers have the power to disperse intimidating groups and exclude people from the area for up to 24 hours. Police and community support officers also have the power in the designated area to take a child home between 9.00pm and 6am if they are not under the control of an adult. However, in a recent judgment^[1] the court held that the police do not have the power to use reasonable force when taking a child home. The Home Office has applied for permission to appeal this judgment.

During 2004 and 2005, Home Office Research Development and Statistics researchers conducted a data collection exercise on the use of dispersal orders. Representatives from each police force were asked to provide data on their force's use of dispersal powers. The data collected covered the period from the introduction of dispersal powers in January 2004 until 31 August 2004 and the exercise was repeated in 2005 to include the period 1 September 2004 to 30 June 2005 inclusive.

Overall, forty-two police forces responded to the survey; but not all forces responded to both sweeps. In addition, several forces provided a nil response because they do not collect data, they had not designated any areas or they were not able to provide data for both survey sweeps^[2].

In addition, of those forces who did respond, not all of them were able to provide data on the number of people who had been dispersed from the areas since they had been designated (no data was provided for 516 designated areas).

Finally, respondents were also asked about the number of under 16s who had been accompanied home by officers using discretionary powers within the designated areas up until 30 June 2005. However, there was a limited response to this question (no data was available for 573 areas).

- 809 areas were designated in 42 forces^[3]
- 14,375 people were dispersed from the designated areas
- 520 under 16s were taken home

1 R (W) v Metropolitan Police and the London Borough of Richmond.

2 Several Police Force which cover large urban areas were not able to provide data. Therefore these estimates of use of the powers are likely to be below actual figures on use.

3 234 areas were designated between January and August 2004; 575 areas were designated between September 2004 and June 2005