Youth Taskforce study of perceptions in Youth Crime Action Plan areas

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Youth Taskforce Study of Perceptions in Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP) Areas

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Introduction:

Youth Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour as Policy Issues

In 2008, a comprehensive list of cross-governmental measures was laid out in the Youth Crime Action Plan. These measures were aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour and also, the number of young people entering the criminal justice system by 20% by 2020. The plan seeks to operate a 'triple track' approach through enforcement and punishment where behaviour is unacceptable, non-negotiable support and challenge where it is most needed, and better and earlier prevention.

Public confidence in youth crime practice and policy is a central principle in establishing stronger and safer communities. The community is seen as playing a central role in crime prevention, not least because the public tend to overestimate the crime problem.[1]

The Aim of the Study

The Youth Taskforce in the Department for Education commissioned this piece of work to explore the views of residents within Youth Crime Action Plan (YCAP) areas to understand more about perceptions regarding young people and crime, anti-social behaviour and alcohol use/misuse and efforts to tackle these problems. The research activities commissioned were:

   I. A quantitative (baseline) survey of residents from target neighbourhoods within YCAP areas
   II. A qualitative exercise with young people

The intention of the study was to look beyond the official crime statistics and understand more about the views of communities in the areas where youth crime and anti-social behaviour has been a significant local issue (and subsequently where YCAP has been targeted).

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[1] Hough, M. and Roberts, J. (1998) Attitudes to Punishment Findings from the 1996 British Crime Survey. Home Office Research Findings No 64; and Mattinson, J. and Mirrlees-Black, C. (2000). Attitudes to Crime and Criminal Justice: Findings from the 1998 British Crime Survey (Research Findings No. 111). London: Home Office (2000)

Measuring Perceptions of Youth Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

The British Crime Survey (BCS) is a prominent measure of people's perceptions of anti-social behaviour and attitudes towards the criminal justice system and the police. It explores people's attitudes to crime and fear of crime and looks at issues like anti-social behaviour. Unlike crime, incidents of ASB are difficult to measure and quantify. A Home Office report states, 'by describing the consequences of behaviour rather than the behaviour itself, the definition lacks specificity and measurability'.[2] There is no central form of measurement, nor is it possible in some cases to specify who is the 'victim', or indeed, what is an 'incident'.

ASB cannot be measured in the same way as crime. Incidents that cause public annoyance and anxiety can only be measured through public perceptions. The very definition of ASB is founded upon a perception – of behaviour which is '*likely to cause* harassment, alarm or distress'.

This study aims to look at the issue of youth crime and anti-social behaviour in the communities where these issues are most problematic and understand more about the perceptions of adult and younger residents.

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[2] Participants were shown the male and female 'you wouldn't start a night like this…' adverts.
http://wouldyou.direct.gov.uk/Stories.php

Objectives

Quantitative research objectives

The overarching aim of the quantitative research was to:-

> *explore the views of residents within YCAP areas regarding the impact and implementation of YCAP, and also their more general perceptions regarding young people and crime/anti-social behaviour and efforts to tackle t*hese issues

Within this, the main individual aims were to:

- Establish whether people felt youth crime and ASB had got better or worse, and identify the reasons for any change

- Measure awareness of and support for initiatives to tackle youth crime and ASB in the area

- Measure satisfaction with police and local agencies providing youth crime enforcements and initiatives

- Establish the extent to which teenagers hanging around is seen as a problem

- Look particularly at views on teenagers hanging around drinking alcohol as a problem

- Investigate opinion on a menu of options designed to reduce young people drinking alcohol

Qualitative research objectives

The aim of the qualitative research with young people was to explore young people's experiences and perceptions of crime, anti-social behaviour and alcohol generally, including how these issues affected them personally and the areas they lived in; and to explore awareness of initiatives that are running as part of the YCAP programme. The specific research objectives were to:-

- Ascertain whether young people view ASB specifically as a 'youth problem'

- Explore young people's experiences and opinions of crime and anti-social behaviour in their communities

- Explore young people's experiences and opinions of drinking alcohol

- Examine awareness and perceived effectiveness of YCAP initiatives and delivery agencies

Methodology

Quantitative methodology

The quantitative research was conducted using random location in-home interviewing, with 2783 interviews being conducted in total across the 69 YCAP areas (list of areas attached at Appendix). The distribution of YCAP areas by Government Office Region is uneven, so the regions with the fewest YCAP areas were oversampled slightly so that over 100 interviews were conducted in each region.

The planned design was for all interviewing in each YCAP area to be concentrated in a single ward, so that there would be a similar level of geographical homogeneity in each local authority, but in practice three authorities supplied two wards and the sample was split between each. This means that the total number of wards covered was 72.

Within each ward a list was drawn up of all Census Output Areas (OAs), and these were then listed from most to least deprived, on the basis of IMD scores, and OAs then selected at random for the survey. The number of OAs selected in each YCAP area was varied to give the target number of interviews in each region. The most OAs selected in a YCAP area was seven, and the lowest number was three, with the vast majority having four or five OAs selected. The total number of OAs selected for interviewing was 275.

Ten interviews were conducted in each sampled OA, with quota controls set for age, and for gender interlocked with working status. The quota targets were set using data from the Census, updated from major government surveys such as the Labour Force Survey.

All interviewing was conducted by experience members of GfK NOP's panel of field interviewers, using Computer-Aided Personal Interviewing (CAPI).

Interviewing took place from 13 November to 13 December 2009.

In the analysis, differences were tested for significance at the 95% level, and this report comments on those differences.

In the report we comment on differences between social class groups, which are defined using the Market Research Society definitions. The various groupings can be broadly described as follows:

- AB – professional and middle and senior managerial

- C1 – junior managerial, clerical and administrative

- C2 – skilled manual workers and foremen

- DE – semi-skilled and un-skilled manual workers plus those entirely dependent on state benefits or pensions

Qualitative methodology

The qualitative approach was derived from a wider approach known as 'citizen journalism', in which participants 'play an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analysing and disseminating news and information.'[3] Our approach was to use multi-stage research that would engage the participants and allow them to develop their ideas and opinions on the subject matters. The three stages of the research were as follows:-

- Stage 1: Explorative pre task – participants took photographs of their area providing researchers with an insight into the key issues affecting them

- Stage 2: Collaborative clinics – 2 ½ hour group discussions were held in each location to explore perceptions of ASB and alcohol use/ misuse

- Stage 3: Online activity board – 3 day activity board with further group discussions and individual activities, examining wider perceptions and influences affecting young people's views on ASB and alcohol use/ misuse

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3 We Media; How audiences are Shaping the Future of News and information, by Shayne Bowman and Chris Willis

Research took place in five regions across England with high proportions of YCAP areas. In total, 60 young people aged 14-19 with varying education and employment status participated across all three stages of the research. Participants were drawn from a number of areas, including urban and less urban areas, spread across each geographical location. The regions and Local Authority areas from which the young people were recruited for the research were as follows:-

North East: Newcastle upon Tyne, Gateshead,

North West: Manchester, Oldham, Salford, Tameside, Trafford

Yorkshire and Humberside: Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield

West Midlands: Birmingham, Walsall

London: Camden, Croydon, Lambeth, Islington, Haringey, Hammersmith and Fulham

Participants included those in full or part time education, those working full or part time and those not in education, employment or training (NEETs). The sample also included a spread of ethnicities and religious backgrounds. Participants from Socio-Economic Groups (SEGs) C1C2DE were included in the research. Participants were also recruited to reflect a range of attitudes and behaviours towards ASB and alcohol. The research was conducted with three age categories. This included age groups:-

- 14-16 (school year groups 10-11): two collaborative clinics (24 participants)

- 16-17: two collaborative clinics (24 participants)

- 18-19: one collaborative clinic (12 participants)

Only those in the 16-17 and 18-19 categories took part in the third online stage of the research. In total 36 young people were invited to participate in the third stage.

Executive Summary

Quantitative Research Summary

Awareness

- Around half of people surveyed were aware of initiatives to reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their area, and awareness was higher in more deprived areas.

    o Those with teenage children were more aware than others

- Around half of people surveyed were specifically aware of increased police presence, but only one in five were aware of police confiscating alcohol from young people, and fewer than one in ten were aware of increased youth worker presence or young people doing visible community service

    o Those in more deprived areas were more aware

- One in four were aware of increased facilities/activities outside of school for young people in the area, but fewer than one in ten were aware of an increase specifically on Friday or Saturday nights

Perceptions of change in youth crime and ASB

- There was no clear majority view on changes in local youth crime and ASB levels – nearly half said that the situation had not changed over the last 12 months.

    o The proportions saying it had gone up a little or down a little were each 15%. The only difference was that more said it had gone up a lot than said it had gone down a lot (11% and 4%)

    o Black and Asian respondents were more likely than White respondents to say it had gone down

- Perceptions of changes in the levels of public drinking by young people were similar to those regarding changes in youth crime and ASB – although youth drinking was seen a little more often as having gone up

- For the most part, those who thought youth crime and ASB had gone up also felt the same about youth public drinking, but the correlation was by no means complete

Prevalence of specific aspects of ASB in local area

- Noisy neighbours and abandoned cars were clearly seen as the least significant problems – fewer than one in five thought either was a very or fairly serious problem

- Teenagers hanging around and litter were seen as the biggest problems, with over half of respondents saying that they were very or fairly big problems

- Those who thought teenagers hanging around was a problem were most likely to have seen them swearing, being loud or noisy, drinking alcohol, being a general nuisance and littering

- Around a third of respondents think that teenagers hanging around is, of itself, antisocial behaviour. Older people are much more likely to think this than younger people

- Only a quarter of respondents were worried about their own personal safety when they saw teenagers hanging around during the daytime, but almost a half were after dark (over a half if we include those who never go out after dark)

- The two most common causes cited by respondents for crime/ASB by young people were a lack of things for them to do and poor parenting

Dealing with the problem

- While overall agreement that the police and local agencies were dealing with the problems of youth crime and ASB was high, it was noticeable that strong agreement was not high.
  - Women, those with teenage children, and Black and Asian respondents were more likely to agree that the police and local agencies were dealing with the problems of youth crime and ASB

- *Providing more activities for young people*, *confiscating alcohol*, and *making it harder for them to buy alcohol* were all seen as good ideas, the last one particularly so, with three in four saying it was a very good idea

- Respondents were fairly evenly split over whether parents took enough responsibility for their children – 39% said they did and 45% said that they didn't

- Over half agreed that most teenagers are responsible and well-behaved, while only a third disagreed

Implications: Drawing conclusions from this and other surveys

Each one of the seven elements of ASB was rated as more of a problem in this survey than in BCS. This is to be expected as BCS covers the whole country rather than just areas with high crime/ASB and deprivation, and so does not provide a true comparator.

The Places survey (Communities and Local Government, 2008) asks the same question on prevalence of the seven elements of ASB as in this survey and in BCS, though with a postal rather than CAPI methodology. Each item was rated as more of a problem on the Places survey than on BCS, which is likely to be because of the different methodology – either the difference between self-completion and interviewer-administered data collection or the lower response rate achieved on Places – or a different context. On BCS, respondents are also asked about some quite serious crimes, which would tend to make ASB seem less of a priority than on surveys that ask about more everyday things.

Comparing the Places survey results from YCAP local authorities with the YTF (Youth Taskforce) survey shows that each of the seven strands of ASB is seen as a bigger problem in the YTF survey than in the Places survey. This is internally consistent, since the Places survey covers the whole of each authority, while the YTF survey covers only wards where there is a youth crime and ASB problem and subsequently, YCAP activity.

Qualitative Research Summary

Young People's Knowledge of and Involvement in Crime and ASB

Who is involved?

Participants were aware of numerous media reports associating teenagers with ASB in particular and subsequently regarded it as primarily a youth problem.   Due to this association, ASB was seen as an immediate issue that touched their lives.

When depicting young people who might be involved in crime and ASB, the research participants described young people who were different to themselves. However, when discussing what they did in their spare time, many participants recognised that their behaviour could perhaps be interpreted as ASB. Young people involved in crime and ASB were said to most likely be living in a 'rough' area and without positive adult role models at home.

Where does crime and ASB takes place?

For an activity to be defined as ASB specifically, it was thought that it had to be visible or have an impact on other people's lives. Visible ASB was said to happen in 'rough' areas where graffiti and littering were commonplace.

Many young people did not feel that they had access to suitable facilities where they could legitimately take part in the types of activities they wanted to. The young people in the sample spoke of purposely socialising in isolated and quiet areas such as parks to avoid being labelled as antisocial or be reprimanded for their behaviour. By limiting the visibility of their behaviour and its impact on others, these young people were able to take part in activities they wanted to without adult supervision e.g. drinking alcohol when underage.

Why do young people engage in crime and ASB?

The young people that took part in the research felt that youth crime and ASB were more likely to happen during the evenings, weekends and school holidays when young people have more spare time. The main causes of crime and ASB amongst young people were considered to be:
- Lack of suitable facilities leading to boredom; and
- Experimental activities such as drinking alcohol leading to uncharacteristic behaviour.

Young people had a carefree attitude to alcohol. Although they acknowledged the link between alcohol and crime and ASB, they did not feel that their experimentation with alcohol would have any long term consequences.

Alcohol mis/use

The large majority of young people were drinking alcohol on weekends and during school holidays. Young people were likely to drink with large groups of friends. Younger teenagers aged 14-16 were most often drinking in parks and other deserted outdoor areas. Older teenagers aged 17-19 were accessing legal venues such as pubs, bars and clubs.

Young people associated their drinking with short term consequences such as being sick or having a hangover. Long term consequences were associated with adults who the young people felt had more serious problems with alcohol, such as addiction as a result of depression.

When talking about alcohol mis/use, young people tended to think about the consequences to themselves rather than the local area. However, it was recognised that young people were more likely to commit crime and ASB when they had been drinking.

How to tackle crime, antisocial behaviour and alcohol misuse

Young people in the research sample discussed a number of the YCAP initiatives. Awareness of initiatives was relatively high across the participants. However, many young people felt that the initiatives had limited impact on crime and ASB in their local area. It was recognised that a range of measures were required to tackle crime and ASB, including disciplinary and supportive approaches.   Where initiatives were identified as having a disciplinary function, the majority of young people felt that these initiatives were too lenient which in turn undermined the authority of the police or PCSOs implementing them.

Young people spoke of how they were able to avoid 'being caught' by the police/PCSOs and would regroup in different locations to avoid contact with the authorities.

Most young people were able to access alcohol and participants across locations all knew of local off licences that would sell them alcohol. Participants also spoke about avoiding large supermarket chains where legal age laws were more likely to be enforced.

Young people called for government to look at the causes of crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly boredom, which was seen as the primary cause. Although not an alternative to using other measures to tackle crime and ASB, young people felt that the provision of suitable facilities that met their needs, especially those aged between 14-16 years old, could tackle the boredom that leads to crime and ASB.

Quantitative Findings

Awareness of Initiatives

Just under half of respondents were aware of any initiatives to reduce youth crime, under-age drinking and antisocial behaviour that had been undertaken in their area by the police, the local council, or charitable organisations (Figure 1). **Women were slightly more aware** than men (50% to 43%) and **those with teenage children were, not surprisingly, more aware** than those with younger children or without children, but there were no other significant differences between demographic groups (Figure 2).

The other notable difference was that **awareness was higher in those areas that were in the bottom 20% of the country in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD).** In these areas equal numbers were aware and not aware, while in the other areas there was a large majority who were not.

Figure 1 Awareness of Initiatives
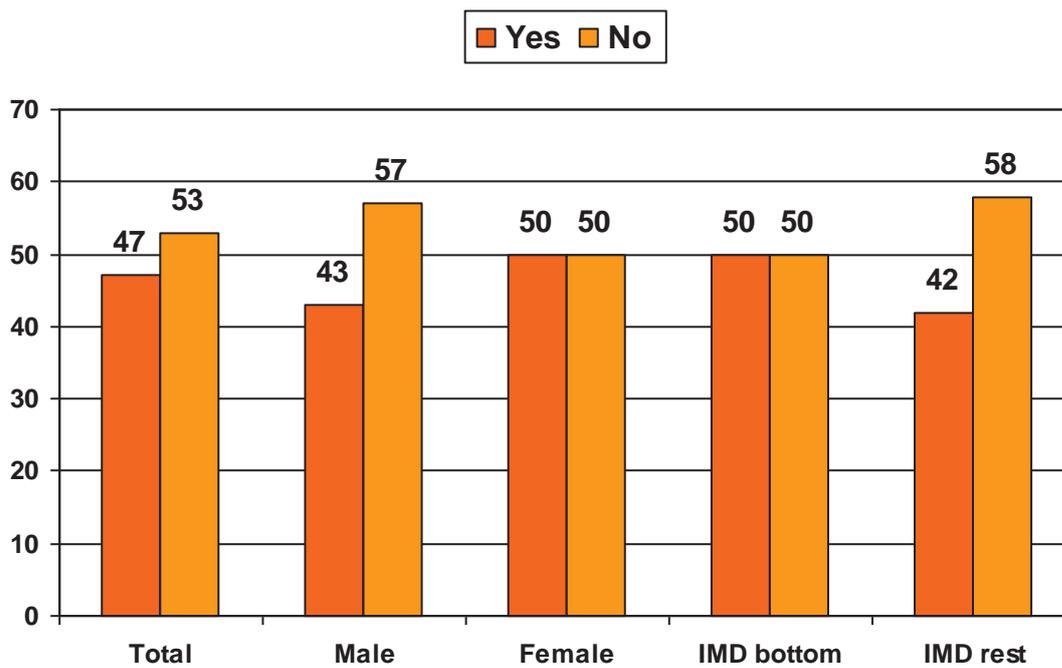
Q4. Are you aware of any activity by local organisations such as the police, the council or voluntary organisations in your area which are trying to reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour and underage drinking?

Base: All = 2783

Figure 2 Awareness of Initiatives – Children in Household
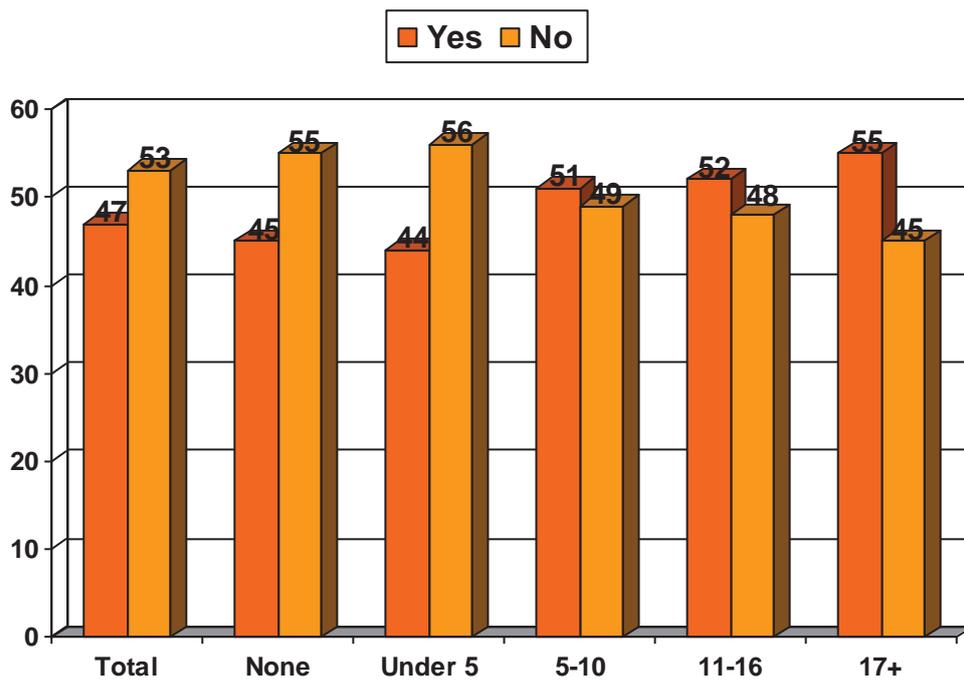

Q4. Are you aware of any activity by local organisations such as the police, the council or voluntary organisations in your area which are trying to reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour and underage drinking?

Base All = 2783

Awareness of specific initiatives was considerably lower, with only two of four specific options being recognised by more than 10% of respondents (Figure 3). A half said they were aware of an increased presence in their area by police and Police Community Support Officers, while a quarter were aware of police confiscating alcohol from young people. Only one in ten had seen young people doing reparation work in the form of community service, or seen an increased presence of youth workers.

Figure 3 Awareness of specific initiatives
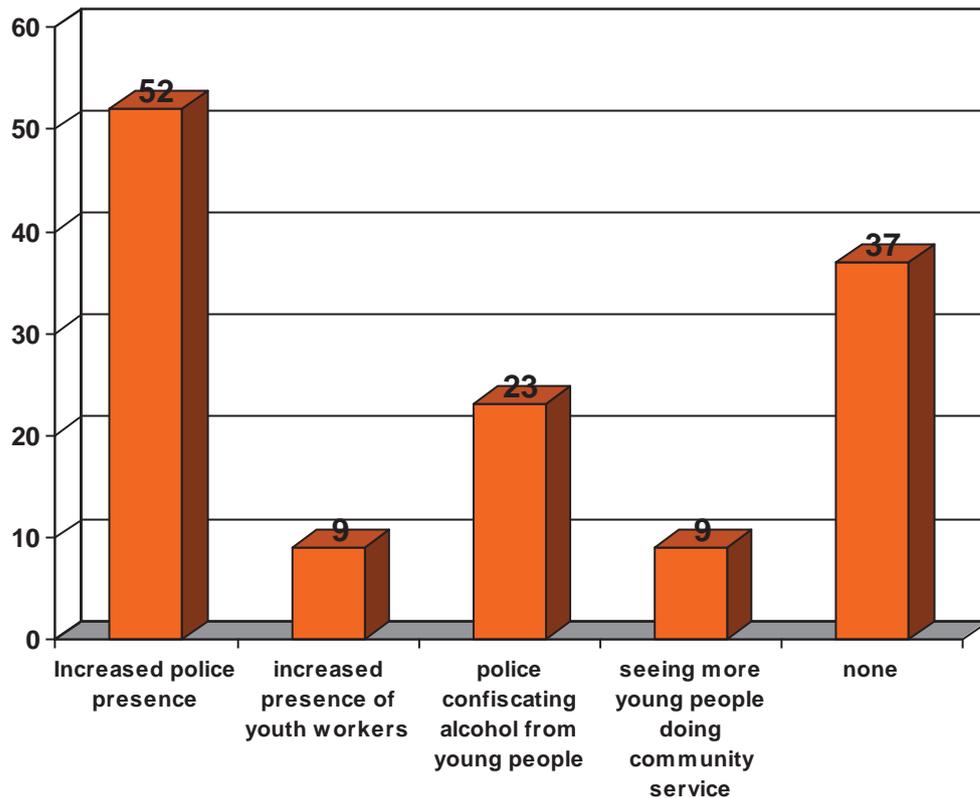
Q5 And are you aware of any of the following?

Base All = 2783

Older respondents were noticeably more likely to say they were aware of none of the four offered alternatives (46% of 65+ against 37%). Black and Asian respondents were more likely to have noticed an increased police presence (65% and 67% against 52% overall), but slightly less likely to have seen police confiscating alcohol from young people. Looking at the smaller differences, younger respondents were slightly more likely to be aware of an increased presence by youth workers (11% against an average of 9%); and those in social class DE were somewhat more likely to be aware of alcohol being confiscated from young people (25% against 23%).

There were also **signs of a correlation between initiatives and the nature of the local area**, with those living in the bottom 20% IMD areas more likely than those elsewhere to be aware of each of the four initiatives to reduce youth crime and ASB. There was also a **clear correlation between perceptions of the level of youth crime and antisocial behaviour in the area and awareness of initiatives**. Those who felt youth crime and antisocial behaviour had gone down over the last twelve months were more aware of all four of the initiatives. Unfortunately we cannot answer the question of whether the fact that there are more of these initiatives has actually made crime go down, or merely that the fact that these initiatives are going on makes people feel more secure, and thus they feel that crime has gone down.

The other specific initiatives investigated were activities and facilities provided for young people in the area. Overall **one in four respondents were aware of an increase in facilities and activities for young people** when they are out of school, but **only one in ten were aware of an increase specifically on Friday or Saturday nights**.

As one would expect, those with no children in their household were less aware at each question, while those with teenage children were the most aware (Figure 4). Similarly, the over 65s were least aware.

Figure 4 Awareness of increase in facilities/activities for young people – number of children
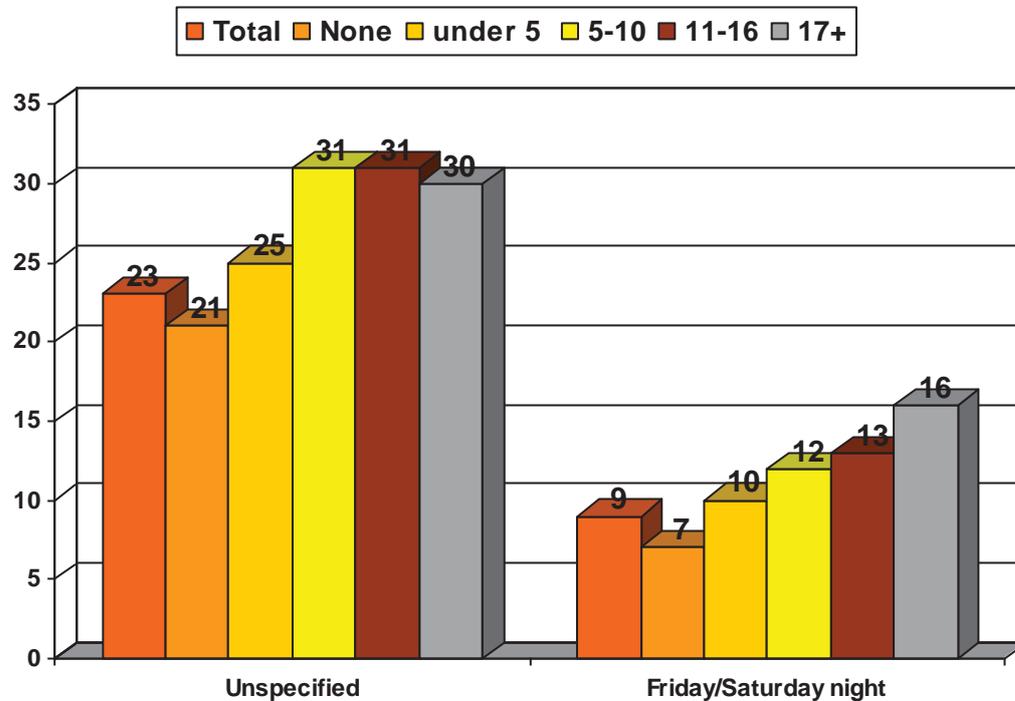
Q6. There has been investment across the country in more things for young people to do at the times when they need them. In your area, are you aware of an increase in facilities or activities for young people for when they are not in school?

Q7. And are you aware of an increase in facilities or activities for young people on Friday and/or Saturday nights?

Base: All = 2783

If the increase in facilities or activities for young people is intended to be targeted at the most deprived areas then that approach seems to be working, since those in the 20% most deprived areas were more aware than the rest of a general increase in activities for young people (25% against 21%). Again raising the question of cause and effect, those who felt youth crime and antisocial behaviour had gone down in their area were much more aware of extra activities (32% against the average of 23%).

Perceptions of crime and antisocial behaviour in the local area

Respondents were split on the question of whether youth crime and antisocial behaviour had gone up or down in the local area over the past twelve months (Figure 5). 27% felt there was more of it, 19% felt there was less, while the rest felt there had been no change.

The questions on change were asked only of those who had lived in the area for six months or more, but these made up the vast majority of the sample.

Figure 5 – Perception of change in youth crime and antisocial behaviour
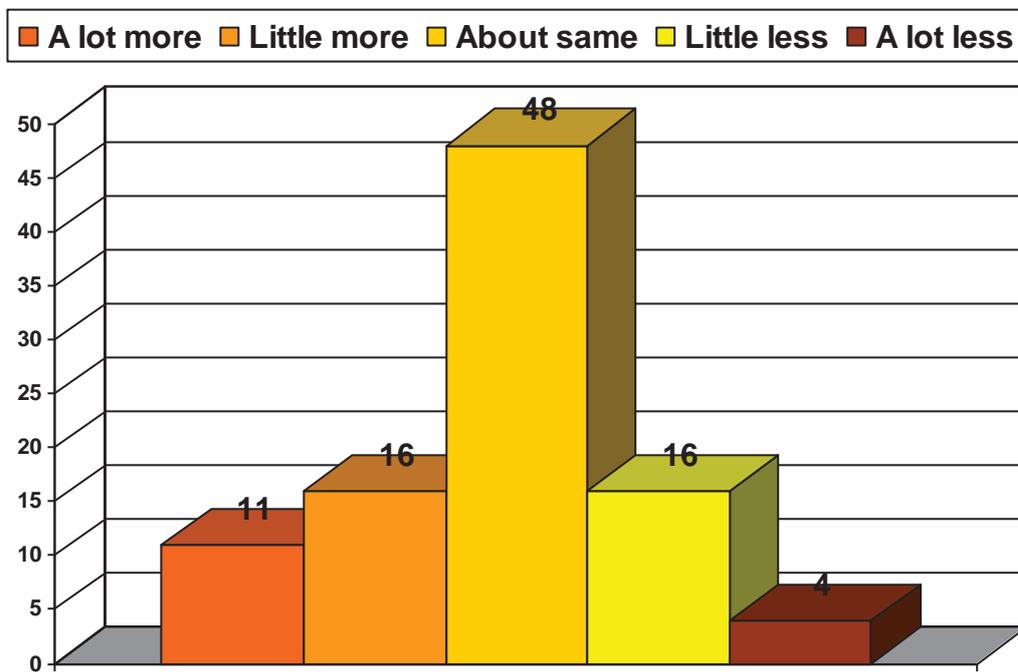
Q8. Thinking about this area, how much would you say that crime and antisocial behaviour caused by young people has changed in the last 12 Months? Would you say that in this area there is more, or less crime and antisocial behaviour caused by young people?

Base: All who lived in local area for more than 6 months = 2628

Whereas previous questions had shown few variations by demographic characteristics, the perception of changes in youth crime and anti-social behaviour was one where there were considerable differences. There was no noticeable difference between men and women, or between the different age groups, but **there was a noticeable difference by social class** (Figure 6). ABs were most likely to say that youth crime and anti-social behaviour had stayed about the same (57% against an overall average of 48%), while DEs were more likely both to say that it had gone up (30% against 24% of ABs) and that it had gone down (21% against 13% of ABs).

As Figure 6 below shows, the DEs were particularly likely to think there was much more, and to think that there was a little less.

Figure 6 Perception of change in youth crime and antisocial behaviour – Social Class
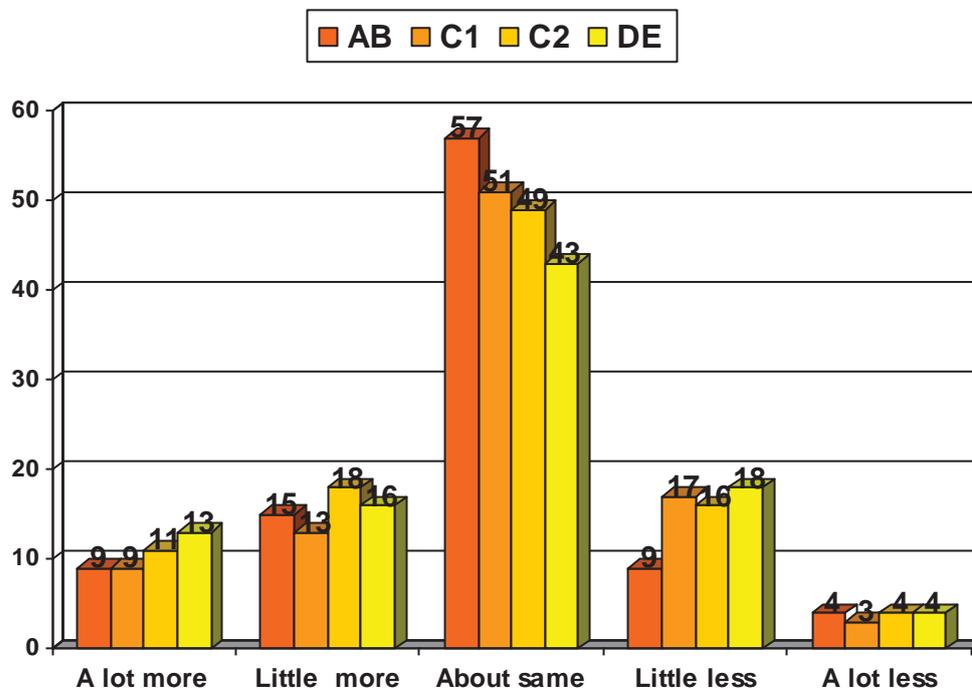

Q8. Thinking about this area, how much would you say that crime and antisocial behaviour caused by young people has changed in the last 12 Months? Would you say that in this area there is more, or less crime and antisocial behaviour caused by young people?

Base: All who lived in local area for more than 6 months = 2628

There were also significant differences by ethnicity, but they were not the simple white versus non-white differences that tend to be the most common. Although the sub-sample sizes for ethnic minorities are small, there was a **significant difference between Black and Asian respondents**. Both groups were more likely than White respondents to say youth crime and antisocial behaviour had gone down since a year ago, while Asian respondents were more likely to say it had gone up than were Black or White respondents (Figure 7). Among Black respondents, 27% said it had gone down and 24% that it had gone up, while among Asian respondents the corresponding figures were 24% and 33%. In contrast, White respondents were much more likely to say there had been no change.

Figure 7 Perception of change in youth crime and antisocial behaviour – Ethnicity
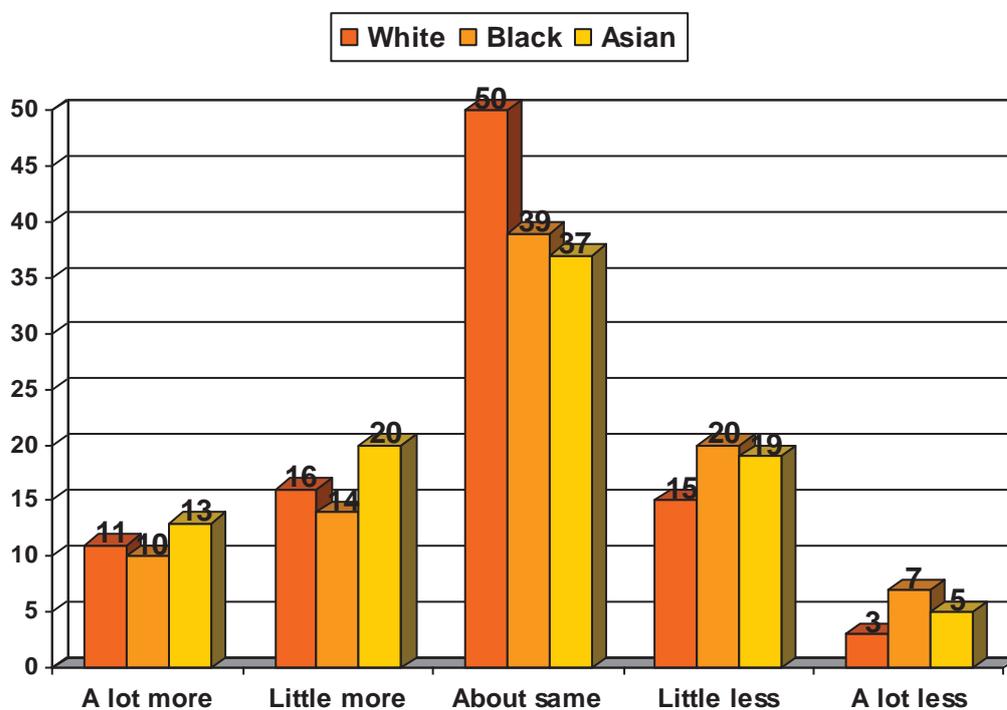

Q8. *Thinking about this area, how much would you say that crime and antisocial behaviour caused by young people has changed in the last 12 Months? Would you say that in this area there is more, or less crime and antisocial behaviour caused by young people?*

Base: All who lived in local area for more than 6 months = 2628

Those with children aged 11-16 were more likely than all the other groups to think that youth crime and antisocial behaviour had gone up (34% against an overall average of 27%). This may reflect the fact that, by having children of their own in the age group mostly responsible for youth crime and antisocial behaviour, they were more likely to come into contact with, or at least hear about, those who were involved in it than those people with no children in this age group. This in turn could mean that they are indeed in a better position to be aware of the true level, or merely that, because they hear their children talking about antisocial behaviour or crime perpetrated by their peers, they assume it must be very wide-spread.

There were also significant differences between the bottom IMD 20% and the rest
(Figure 8), though not all of these were as one might have predicted. Those in the bottom
20% were more likely to say there was more youth crime and antisocial behaviour, but they
were no less likely to say it had gone down. In fact they were fractionally (and not
significantly) more likely to say it had gone down as well. Those not in the bottom IMD 20%
were far more likely to say the level of youth crime and antisocial behaviour had stayed the
same. This ties in with the finding above that perceptions of ASB were higher in this survey
than in the nationally representative BCS and Places Survey.

Figure 8 - Perception of change in youth crime and antisocial behaviour – IMD scores
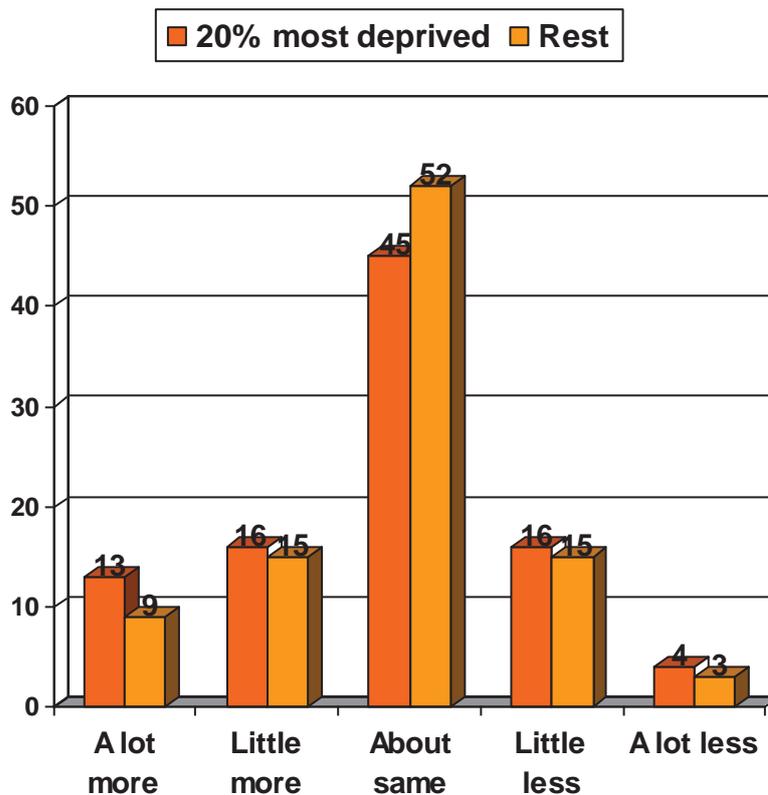

*Q8. Thinking about this area, how much would you say that crime and antisocial behaviour
caused by young people has changed in the last 12 Months? Would you say that in this area
there is more, or less crime and antisocial behaviour caused by young people?*

Base: All who lived in local area for more than 6 months = 2628

Perceptions of the changes in public drinking by young people were similar to perceptions of changes in youth crime and ASB. Thus 30% felt there were more young people drinking alcohol on the street, and 27% that there was more youth crime and antisocial behaviour. Similarly 15% felt there was less public drinking by young people and 19% that there was less youth crime and antisocial behaviour.

As Figure 9 shows, the similarity extends to the more detailed figures for being a lot or a little higher or lower.

Figure 9 Perception in change in young people drinking alcohol in public and change in youth crime and antisocial behaviour
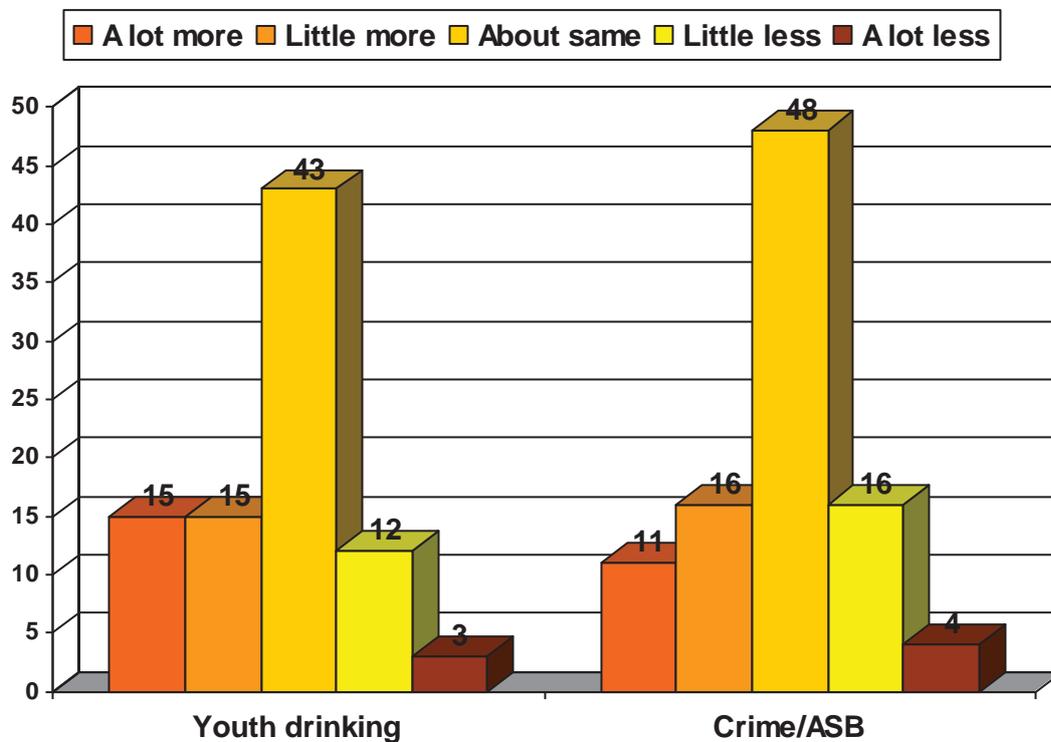
Q9. Thinking about this area, how much would you say that young people drinking alcohol in public places has changed in the last 12 Months? Would you say that in this area there are more, or fewer young people drinking alcohol in public places than there were 12 months ago?

Base: All who lived in local area more than 6 months = 2628

There was **no clear pattern by age** with regard to views of changes in young people drinking alcohol in public. However, by and large older people (especially the older middle-aged) were more likely to say there was more public drinking by young people, while the young people themselves were more likely to say there was less – thus 36% of 45-54 year-olds and 33% of 55-64 year-olds said there was more, against an average of 30%, while 21% of 16-24 year-olds said there was less, against an average of 15% (Figure 10).

But as Figure 10 shows, there was no simple pattern of the proportion saying there was a lot more rising from each age group to the next and the proportion saying there was a lot less falling at the same rate. There is a consistent fall in the proportion saying there is a little less, but that is the only one.

Figure 10 Perception in change in young people drinking alcohol in public – Age of respondent
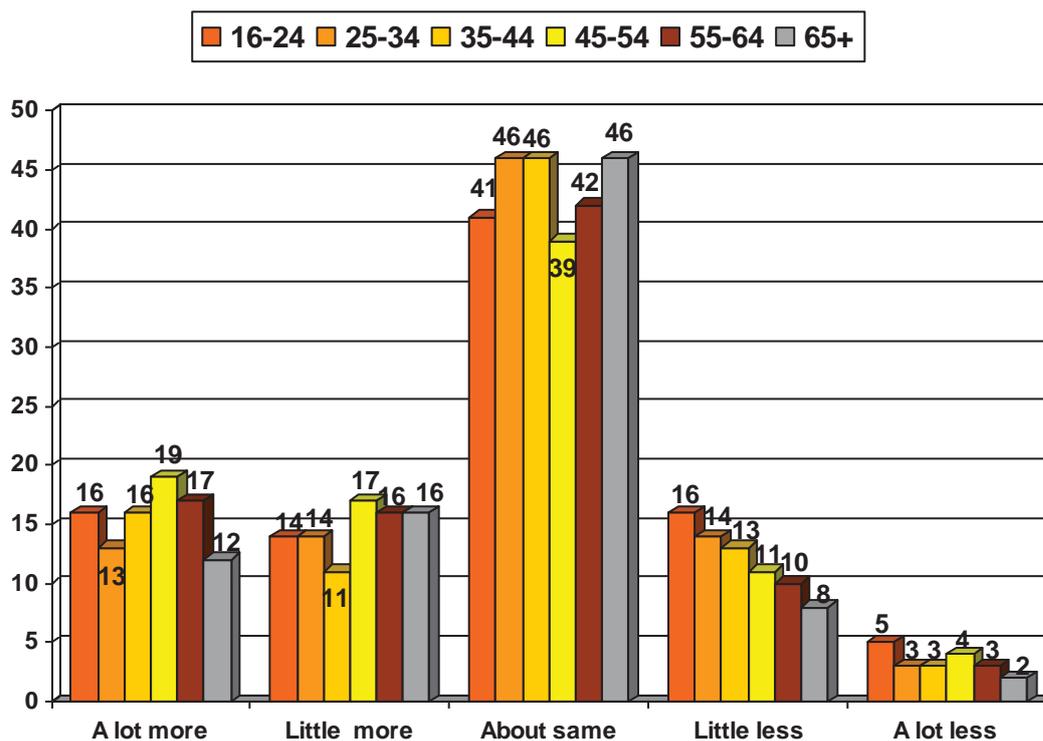

Q9. Thinking about this area, how much would you say that young people drinking alcohol in public places has changed in the last 12 Months? Would you say that in this area there are more, or fewer young people drinking alcohol in public places than there were 12 months ago?

Base: All who lived in local area more than 6 months = 2628

When we look the question asking about changes to young people drinking alcohol in public by social class, there is a clear split between C2s and DEs, among whom 35% and 33% respectively think there is more youth public drinking, and ABs and C1s, among whom only 24% think there is (Figure 11). But there is no significant difference between the class groups in terms of the proportions thinking there is less public youth drinking – it is just that ABs and C1s are more likely to say it has stayed the same. And again, it is only on the "a lot more" answer option that we see a clear progression through the classes, with the proportion saying there is a lot more drinking by young people rising consistently from one class group to the next.

Figure 11 Perception in change in young people drinking alcohol in public – Social class
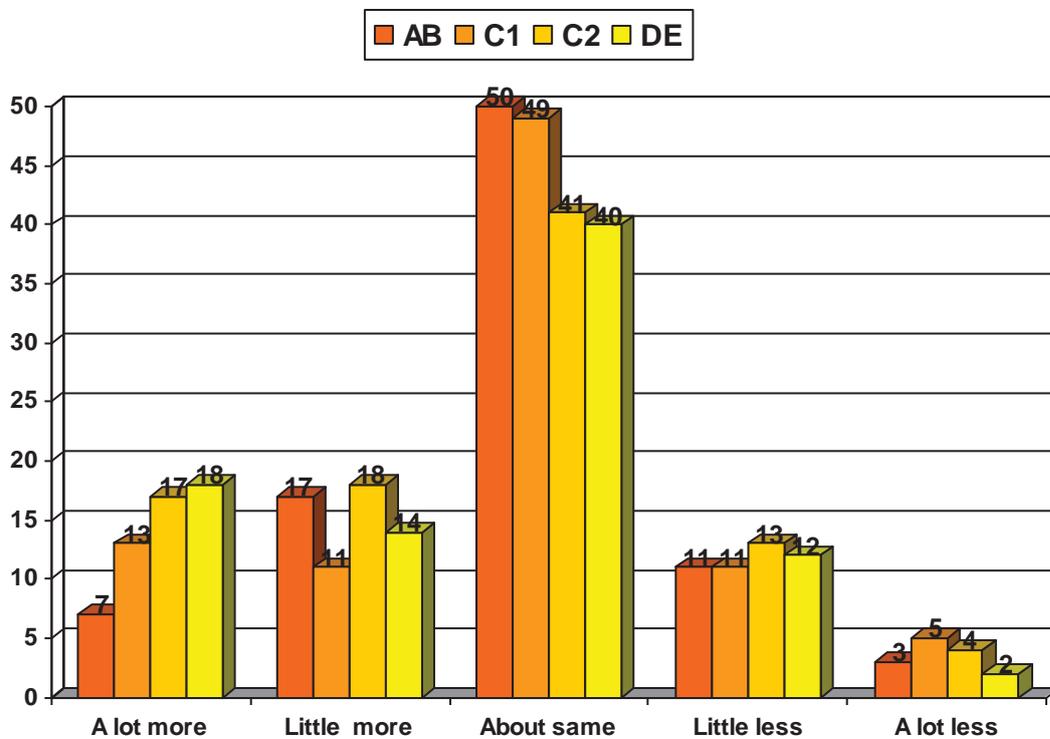

Q9. Thinking about this area, how much would you say that young people drinking alcohol in public places has changed in the last 12 Months? Would you say that in this area there are more, or fewer young people drinking alcohol in public places than there were 12 months ago?

Base: All who lived in local area more than 6 months = 2628

Figure 9 has already shown that there is a very similar pattern of responses to the two questions on changes in youth crime and youth antisocial behaviour and changes in youth public drinking, but the correlation between the answers to the two questions is by no means complete. For example, of those who said that there is more youth crime and antisocial behaviour, only 64% said that there was also more youth public drinking, while of those who said there was less youth crime and antisocial behaviour, only 41% said there was also less youth drinking.

What this means is that although the overall answers to the two questions are similar, and there is a fairly high level of consistency in answers across the two questions, **there are plenty of people who think youth crime and antisocial behaviour has gone up or down, but who think that there had been no change in youth public drinking, and vice versa**.

Figure 12 Perception in change in young people drinking alcohol in public compared with perception in change in youth crime and antisocial behaviour
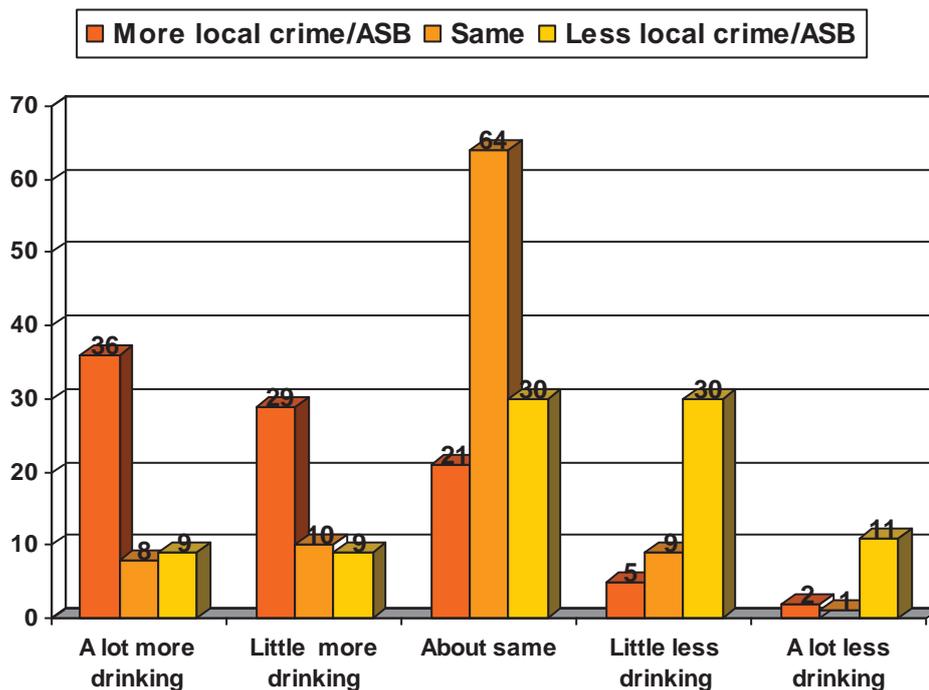

Q9. Thinking about this area, how much would you say that young people drinking alcohol in public places has changed in the last 12 Months? Would you say that in this area there are more, or fewer young people drinking alcohol in public places than there were 12 months ago?

Base: All who lived in local area more than 6 months = 2628

Anti-Social Behaviour

The British Crime Survey (BCS) has for a number of years included questions on perceived levels of ASB. Respondents are asked to indicate how much of a problem seven elements, or 'typologies', of ASB are within '15 minutes of where you live'. The seven elements are;

- Noisy neighbours or loud parties
- Teenagers hanging around the streets
- Rubbish or litter lying around
- Vandalism and graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles
- People using or dealing drugs
- People being drunk or rowdy in public places
- Abandoned or burnt-out cars

What is apparent from the past eight sweeps of the BCS is that the vast majority of respondents *do not* perceive a problem with any of the seven types of ASB.[4] Perceived levels of ASB peaked at 21% in 2002/03 but have to date remained stable at 17% since 2007/8[5] Of the seven strands that make up the overall ASB measure, the 2008/09 BCS showed that the most widely perceived problems are teenagers hanging around, rubbish or litter lying around and people using or dealing drugs; 30%, 30% and 28% respectively.

Having asked specific questions about youth crime and antisocial behaviour and youth public drinking in this survey, we then asked respondents about the prevalence of the seven elements of antisocial behaviour that are included in the British Crime Survey (above).

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[4] Home Office (2009) Perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour: Findings from the 2008/09 British Crime Survey Supplementary Volume 1 to Crime in England and Wales 2008/09, London: Home Office

[5] National Audit Office (2006) The Home Office: Tackling anti-social behaviour. Report by the   Comptroller and Auditor General HC 99 Session 2006-2007. London: NAO and Parfrement-Hopkins, J. and Hall, P. Perceptions of anti-social behaviour, in Home Office (2009) Perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour: Findings from the 2008/09 British Crime Survey Supplementary Volume 1 to Crime in England and Wales 2008/09, London: Home Office

As Figure 13 shows, the pattern of responses is inconsistent, with some of the problems scoring highly for being a very big problem and a fairly big problem, while others scoring highly for being very big but not for fairly big problems, or vice versa.

There is one clear pattern to emerge, in that **two of the problems – noisy neighbours and abandoned cars – stood out as far less of a problem than the others**, with the latter barely being seen as a problem at all.

At the other extreme there were **two problems that scored highly both for being a very big and a fairly big problem: teenagers hanging around and rubbish or litter**.

Figure 13 – Extent of Seven Strands of Antisocial Behaviour
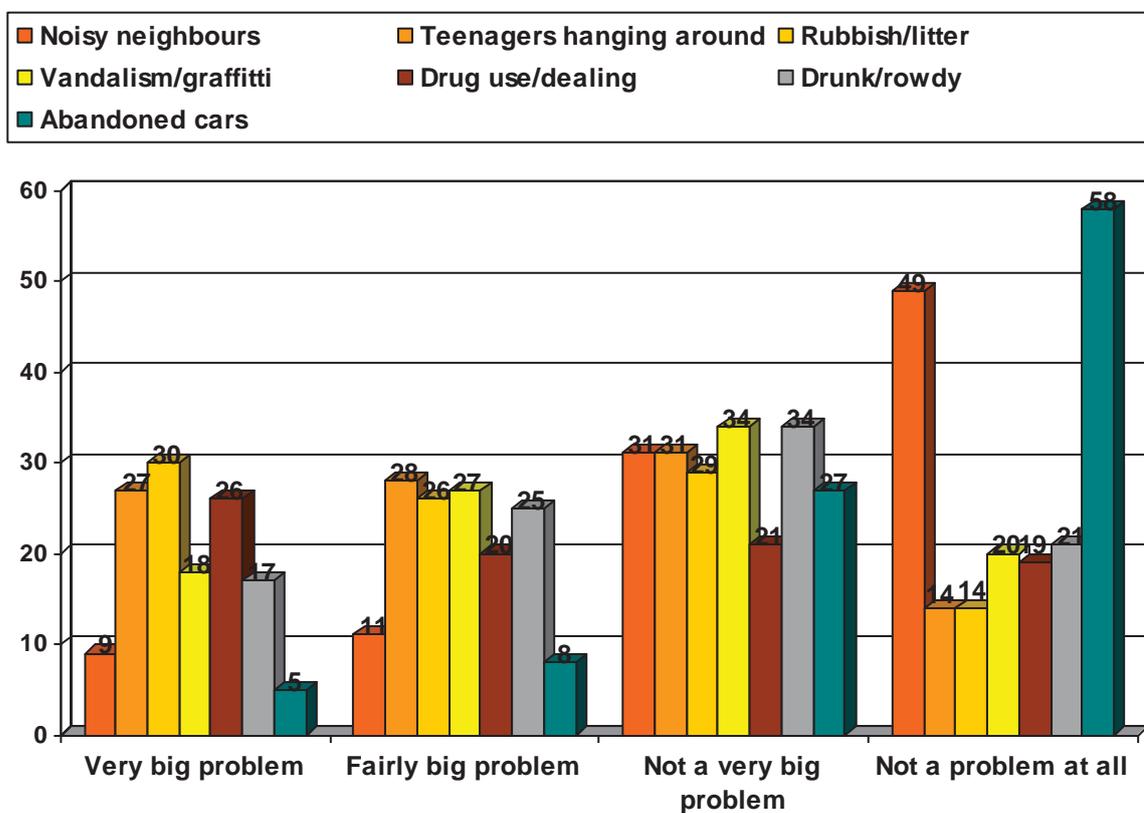
Q13. Even if you haven't seen it yourself, how much of a problem would you say there is with each of these in your local area? Please answer using one of the answers on this card.

Base All =2783

The standard British Crime Survey approach is to combine 'very big problem' and 'fairly big problem' in calculating which strands of ASB are a problem, and so we have replicated that approach to make a comparison with BCS possible.

This shows that for all seven elements, the proportion thinking it a very or fairly big problem is higher in this survey than in BCS. Given that the BCS covers the whole country while this survey is based in areas identified as needing special help to deal with youth crime and antisocial behaviour this is hardly surprising.

Generally speaking, the scores on this survey tended to be half as high again as on BCS, though the score for noisy neighbours was almost twice as high (though from a very low base).

The Places survey, a postal survey conducted in each local authority in England and published by the department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), provides a further point of comparison, though the difference in methodology means we should not necessarily expect a close correlation. But because results are available for the Places survey both for the whole country and for those local authorities that contain YCAP areas (and the British Crime Survey is not broken down into Local Authority areas), Places provides a form of triangulation with the YTF survey and BCS.

Figure 14 shows that for **every element of ASB, there are more people on Places than on BCS thinking it a fairly or very big problem, which must presumably be a function of the difference in methodology**.

And for **every single element, the Places score in YCAP authorities taken together is higher than for England as a whole – which is as one might expect**.

Finally, on **every single element, the Places score in YCAP authorities taken together is lower than the score in the YTF survey**, and again this is internally consistent, since the Places survey covers the whole of each authority, while the YTF survey covers only wards where YCAP has been specifically targeted.

Figure 14 Comparison with BCS and Places for proportion thinking each antisocial behaviour item a very or fairly big problem
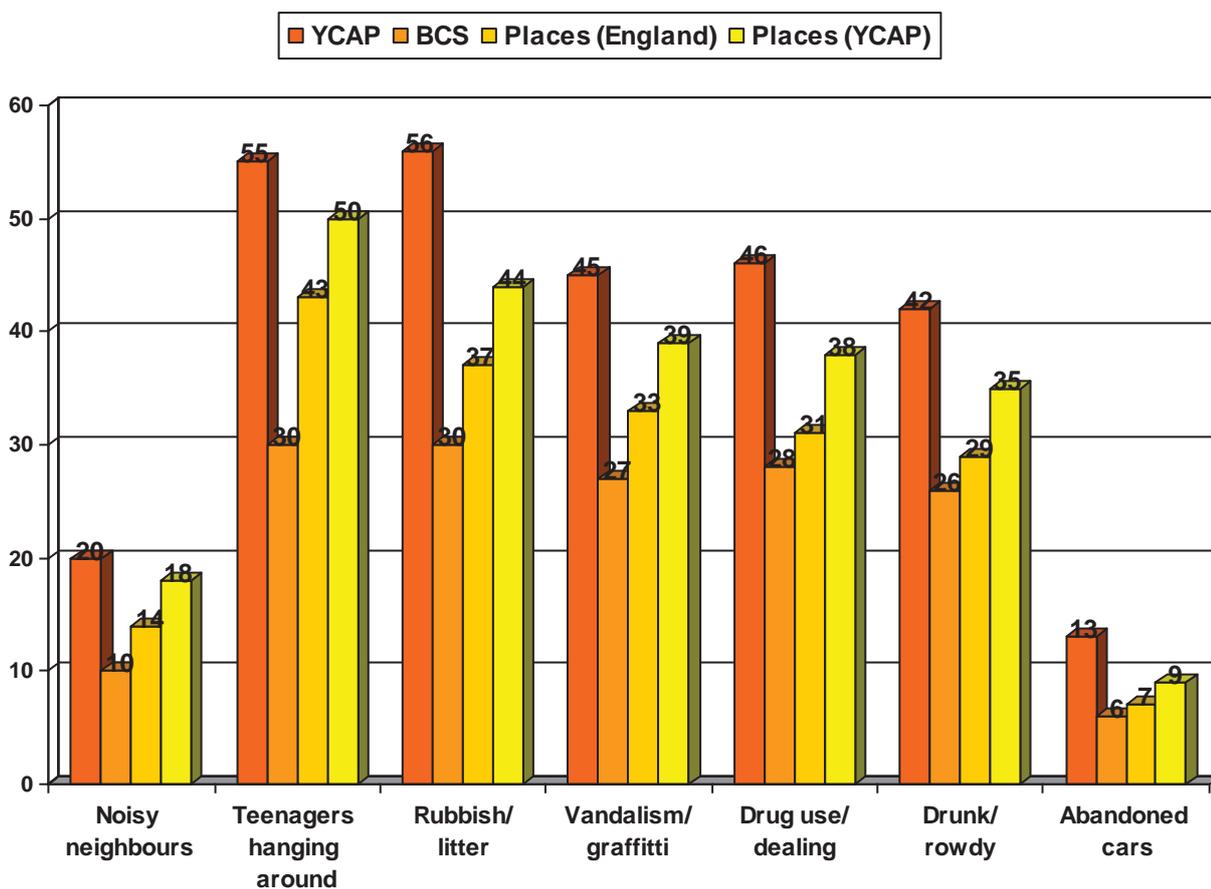
Q13. Even if you haven't seen it yourself, how much of a problem would you say there is with each of these in your local area? Please answer using one of the answers on this card.

Base All = 2783

To reduce the data still further, we followed the BCS procedure for calculating a measure of high antisocial behaviour. Each of the seven elements of ASB was scored from 0 for "not a problem" through to 3 for "a very big problem", and then the seven resulting scores were scored to produce a total for each respondent that could range from 0, for someone who felt every one was not a problem at all, to 21, for someone who felt every one was a very big problem. A score of 11 or higher is taken as a high perception of antisocial behaviour.

On this survey, 36% of respondents reported a high overall antisocial behaviour score, compared with only 17% on BCS, but of course this is again not a very meaningful comparison as the two samples are so different. If we look only at those BCS respondents who are in the 20% most deprived areas this will provide a better comparison, and we then see that the BCS score is much closer to this survey at 31%.

Two of the types of antisocial behaviour were investigated in more detail – people being drunk or rowdy, and teenagers hanging around.

For the first type of ASB, we asked respondents who felt that being drunk and rowdy in public places was a problem which of five different groups was seen as mainly responsible for the problem. Although the question referred to "mainly responsible", respondents were allowed to give more than one answer, and many did.

Top of the list of people perceived as responsible for drunkenness and rowdiness in public places were young drinkers, blamed by two in three of those who thought this was a big problem, though **almost half also blamed people coming home from the pub** (Table 2).

Table 2 – Those responsible for drunk and rowdy behaviour

	%
Young people/underage people drinking alcohol in the street	62
People on their way home from pubs/bars/nightclubs	44
Adults drinking alcohol in the street	32
Your neighbours	11
Homeless people	10

Q14. Of these groups, which if any do you think are mainly responsible for the drunk and rowdy behaviour in your area?

Base: All who are thinking that "People being drunk or rowdy in public places" at Q13 is a big problem = 1193

Because fewer than a half of respondents said that drunk and rowdy behaviour was a big problem, and thus answered this question, the possibilities of sub-analysis are more limited, but one finding stands out. In line with the earlier question on the prevalence of young people drinking in public places, **those aged 45-54 were far more likely to blame young or underage drinkers than the other age groups – 73% did so**. Not surprisingly, those who thought teenagers hanging around was a very or fairly big problem were also much more likely to blame young drinkers for public drunkenness and rowdiness (77%).

The other follow-up question also permits comparison with BCS. Those who thought that teenagers hanging around was a very or fairly big problem were asked which of a list of things they had seen teenagers doing in the area in the last three years. Answers ranged from 81% who said they had seen them swearing or using bad language to 10% who said they had seen them carrying knives. As can be seen from Table 3, answers can be categorised into three broad ranges – the ones that are extremely common, the ones that are fairly rare, and a middling set that are reasonably common.

Table 3 Things teenagers have been seen doing in local area

	%
Swearing or using bad language	81
Being loud, rowdy or noisy	78
Drinking alcohol	73
Just being a general nuisance	72
Littering (e.g. spitting gum on the street)	70
Being abusive, or harassing or insulting people	57
Fighting with each other	57
Blocking the pavement	51
Blocking the entrance to shops	50
Intimidating or threatening people	47
Damaging property or cars	41
Taking drugs	33
Writing graffiti	28
Physically assaulting people	26
Not doing anything in particular	16
Mugging or robbing people	12
Carrying knives	10

Q15. Thinking of things that might be a problem with teenagers hanging around, have you actually seen any of the following in this local area {in the last 3 years} Young people ...

Base: All who are thinking that "Teenagers hanging around the streets" at Q13 is a big problem = 1513

On most of the items in the list the BCS figures were fairly close to those on this survey (see following page), which in a way is slightly surprising given that, as discussed above, the BCS sample is lot less deprived than the areas covered by this survey.

There were **four behaviours where the levels on this survey were considerably higher than on BCS – fighting with each other, blocking the entrance to shops, physically assaulting people, and damaging property or cars** – and three others where it was also significantly higher, as is shown in Table 4.

The one oddity is that on this survey 17% said that they had seen teenagers not doing anything in particular, while no-one said this on BCS. This is more likely to be the result of minor differences in the way the question is asked on the two surveys rather than any real difference between the two samples.

In Table 4 the larger differences are shown in bold type.

Table 4 Things teenagers have been seen doing in local area – comparison with BCS

	YCAP	BCS
	%	%
Swearing or using bad language	81	80
Being loud, rowdy or noisy	78	78
Drinking alcohol	73	77
Just being a general nuisance	72	72
Littering (e.g. spitting gum on the street	**70**	63
Being abusive, or harassing or insulting people	**57**	50
Fighting with each other	**57**	38
Blocking the pavement	51	52
Blocking the entrance to shops	**50**	34
Intimidating or threatening people	**47**	36
Damaging property or cars	**41**	33
Taking drugs	33	37
Writing graffiti	28	27
Physically assaulting people	**26**	11
Not doing anything in particular	**17**	0
Mugging or robbing people	12	10
Carrying knives	10	12

Q15. Thinking of things that might be a problem with teenagers hanging around, have you actually seen any of the following in this local area {in the last 3 years} Young people ...

Base: All who are thinking that "Teenagers hanging around the streets" at Q13 is a big problem = 1513

The anomaly of the difference from BCS over teenagers doing nothing in particular leads neatly on to the question of whether teenagers hanging around is, of itself, antisocial behaviour. This survey asked a slightly different question from BCS. This survey asked *Do you consider teenagers hanging around to be antisocial behaviour?,* whereas the BCS question is *Can I just check, do you think that young people who hang around on the streets in your local area are DELIBERATELY behaving in an anti-social manner?* In this survey the question was asked of all, whereas on BCS it is only asked of those who think teenagers hanging around is a very of fairly big problem in their local area.

Looking first at the total sample on this survey **just over a third (37%) felt teenagers hanging around constituted antisocial behaviour**.

Older people are much more likely to think this, and once again it was the 45-54 year-olds who were the most suspicious, as Figure 15 shows.

Figure 15 – Teenagers hanging around is antisocial behaviour - age
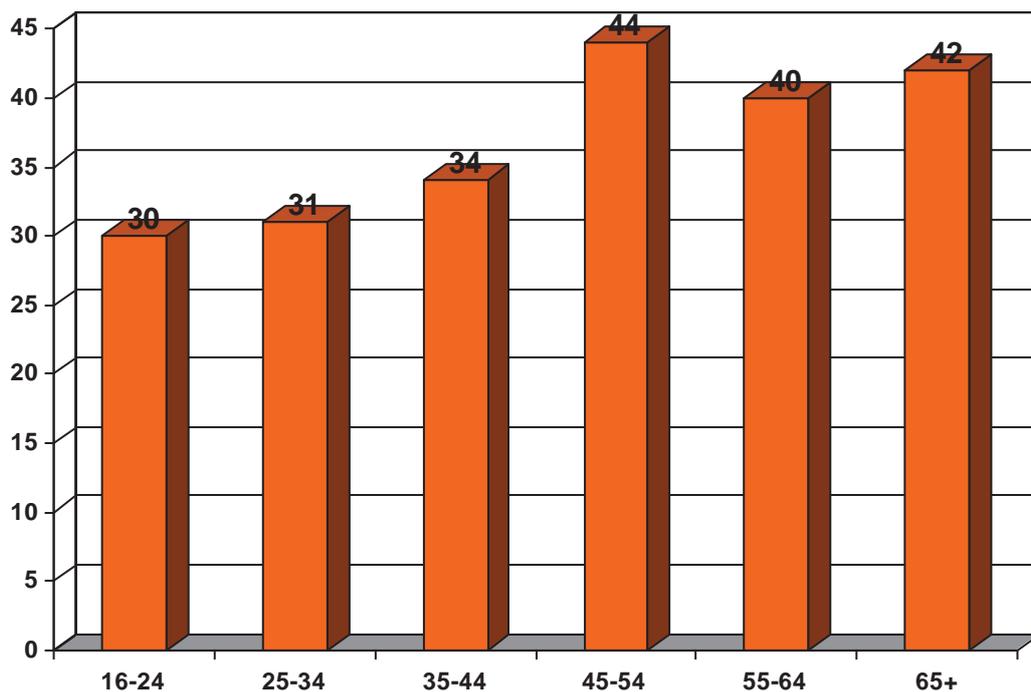
Q16. Do you consider teenagers hanging around to be anti-social behaviour?

Base: All = 2783

There was also a clear difference by social class, with **DEs much more likely to consider teenagers hanging around to be antisocial behaviour** (Figure 16).

Figure 16 – Teenagers hanging around is antisocial behaviour – social class
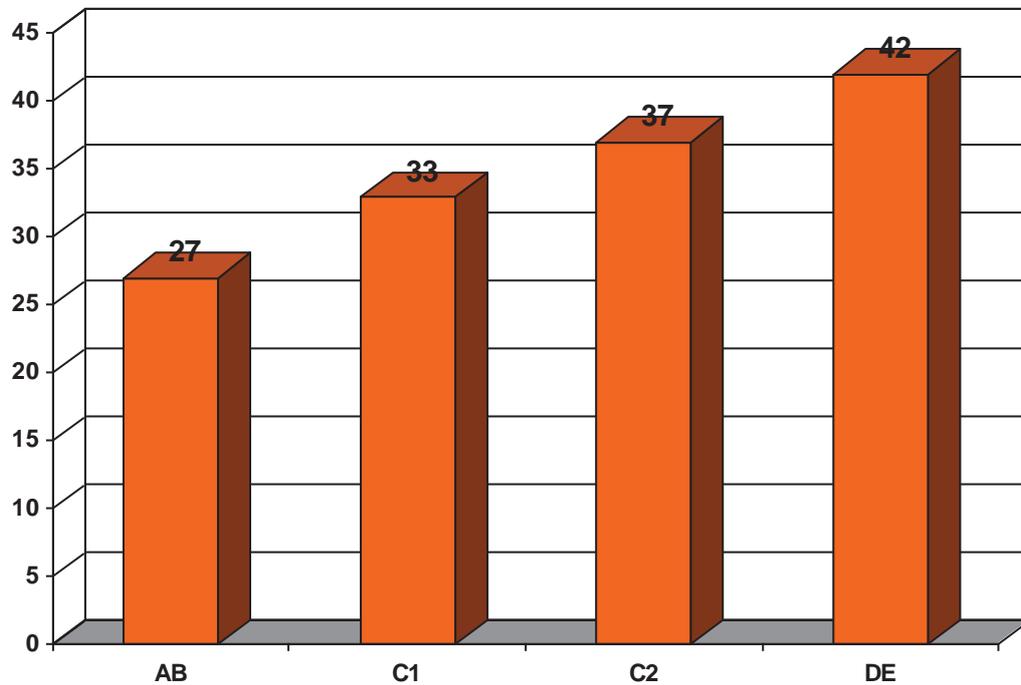
Q16. Do you consider teenagers hanging around to be anti-social behaviour?

Base: All = 2783

Black and Asian respondents were also more likely to consider teenagers hanging around to be antisocial behaviour – 44% and 48% respectively, compared with 36% of White respondents.

Moving on to the comparison with BCS (question wording difference notwithstanding), **those who thought teenagers hanging around was a very or fairly big problem in their area were far more likely to think that teenagers hanging around counted as antisocial behaviour** than those who did not think it was really a problem. Of those who thought teenagers hanging around was a big problem in their local area 60% considered it to be antisocial behaviour, while among those thought it was a fairly big problem 41% did so, and finally among those who thought it was not really a problem in their area, only 23% considered it to be antisocial behaviour.

Combining the answers of respondents who felt that teenagers hanging around was a very and fairly big problem allows us to see that **50% of the people who view teenagers hanging around in their area as a problem view this behaviour as antisocial behaviour**. This finding is very different from BCS, where 81% of all those who thought teenagers hanging around was a problem also thought teenagers hanging around constituted antisocial behaviour. And the use of the word "deliberately" in the BCS question might be expected to lead to a lower score, if anything.

One possible explanation of the discrepancy is the considerable difference between the two surveys in the proportion who thought teenagers hanging around was a problem. As has been shown above (see Figure 14) on BCS only 30% thought this was a very or fairly big problem, whereas on this survey 54% did so.

Respondents were more sympathetic to young people when they were asked if they thought young people hanging around in their area were deliberately acting in an antisocial manner or if they didn't realise that some people think it's antisocial. Almost three in four (71%) said they thought young people didn't realise that their behaviour was anti-social, and **only one in five (21%) thought they were doing it deliberately.**

Interestingly, **the age group most likely to think that young people were deliberately behaving anti-socially was the 16-24 year-olds**, perhaps because they are more likely to be aware of teenagers hanging around. It was those aged 25-53 who were most likely to say that the teenagers didn't realise they were being antisocial. There was no difference by age of children in the household.

Asian respondents were more likely than Black or White ones to say young people were deliberately behaving anti-socially. There was again an association with perceptions of changes in youth crime and anti-social behaviour locally: those who thought this had gone up were much more likely to say teenagers were doing it deliberately (34%), and not surprisingly those who felt teenagers hanging around was a very big problem were more likely to think they were doing it deliberately (33%).

An implication of the perceived prominence of teenagers hanging around is that, as well as possibly being perceived as antisocial behaviour, it may well make some people concerned about their personal safety. **A clear majority of respondents were only a little worried about their personal safety when they saw teenagers hanging around in the daytime** – 30% said they were not very worried and 39% were not at all worried. At the other end of the scale 22% were quite worried and 7% very worried (Figure 17).

People were understandably more concerned after dark; half were very or fairly worried and a further 10% said they never go out after dark or only go out with others.

Figure 17 Worry about personal safety when teenagers hanging around
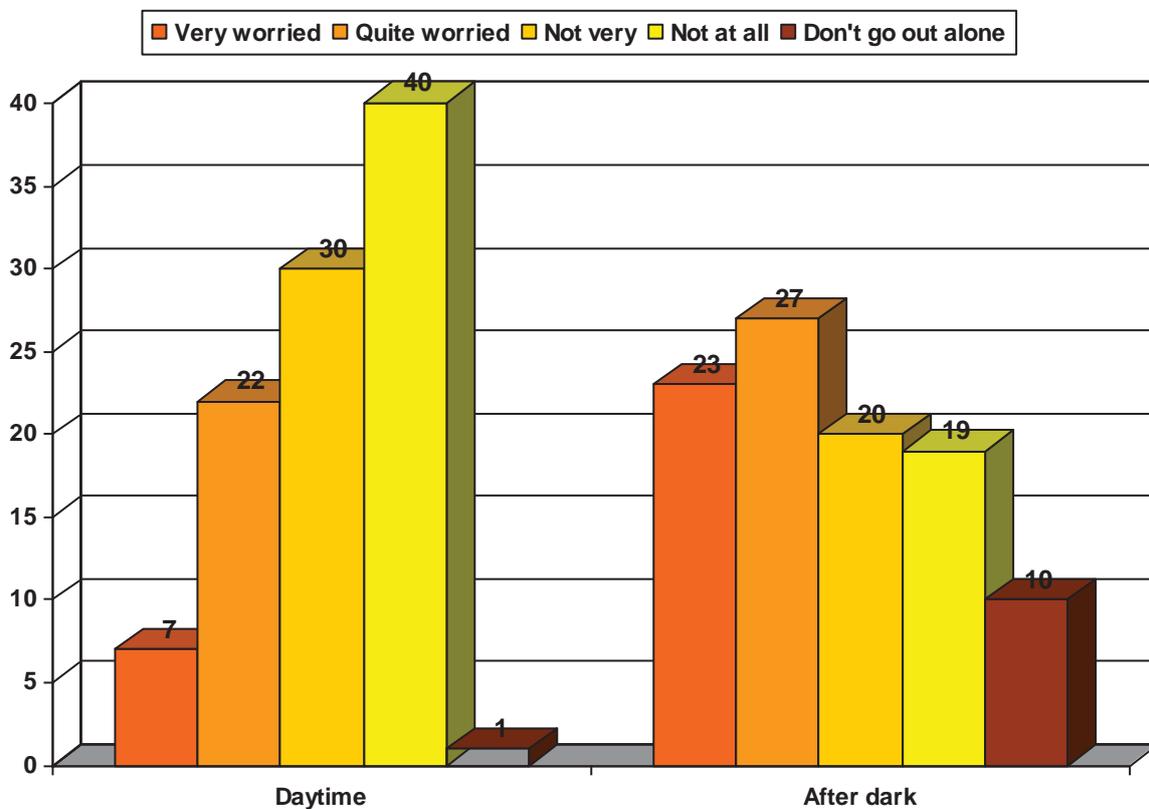
Q19. And when you are out in your local area after dark and you see groups of teenagers hanging around the streets, generally, how worried do you feel about your own personal safety?

Base: All = 2783

As one might expect, women were more worried than men. Going out in the daytime 9% were very worried and 27% fairly worried, compared with 5% and 19% for men, while after dark the comparable figures were 29% and 29% for women and 16% and 25% for men. After dark 14% of women wouldn't go out alone, compared with 9% of men.

Older people were also more worried than younger ones – 37% of over 55s were very or fairly worried in the daytime compared with the overall figure of 29%. After dark the comparable figures were 45% and 50%, which seems counter-intuitive, until we take into account the fact that 30% of the over 65s never go out alone after dark, compared with only 10% of the overall sample. Adding those in with the very and fairly worried categories gives an overall figure of 75% of over 65s and 60% of the whole sample.

Black and Asian respondents were more likely to be worried about going out in their local area than White respondents for both the daylight and after dark: 15% of Black and 14% of Asian respondents were very worried in the daytime while only 6% of White respondents were. For after dark the figures for very worried were 39% for Black and 37% for Asian respondents, but only 20% for White respondents.

Respondents were also asked to list up to three main causes of youth antisocial behaviour from an offered list. When we look at the responses given as the first answer to the question, there is a fairly clear winner: 37% mentioned boredom/not enough for young people to do first, with poor parenting second, but significantly lower on 25%. Around one in ten mentioned alcohol or drugs or low respect for others (13% and 10% respectively).

Table 5 Causes of antisocial behaviour by young people

	First mentioned	All mentions
	%	%
Boredom/not enough for young people to do	37	62
Poor parenting	25	62
Alcohol and drugs	13	50
Low respect for others	11	42
A lack of local jobs	5	23
Poor discipline at school	4	23
Poverty and deprivation	3	15
Ineffective policing	1	11

Q20. Which of these, if any, do you think are the main THREE causes of anti-social behaviour committed by young people today?

Base All = 2783

Women were more likely than men to mention boredom first, young people were much more likely to mention it than older ones, and DEs more likely than the other social class groups. **Younger respondents were less likely to mention poor parenting than all the other age groups.**

When all three mentions are combined to produce an overall figure, **boredom and poor parenting were together at the top of the list as the respondents' views as the main causes of young people's anti-social behaviour**, each mentioned by two-thirds of respondents. **Alcohol was mentioned by a half**, and low respect for others by two in five, and these were the only one mentioned by more than a quarter.

Dealing with the problem

Half of respondents agreed that the police and local agencies were dealing with the youth crime and antisocial behaviour issues that mattered in their area, with only a quarter disagreeing, although it should be noted that only one in ten agreed strongly.

Figure 18 Agreement that the police and local authorities are dealing with youth crime and antisocial behaviour
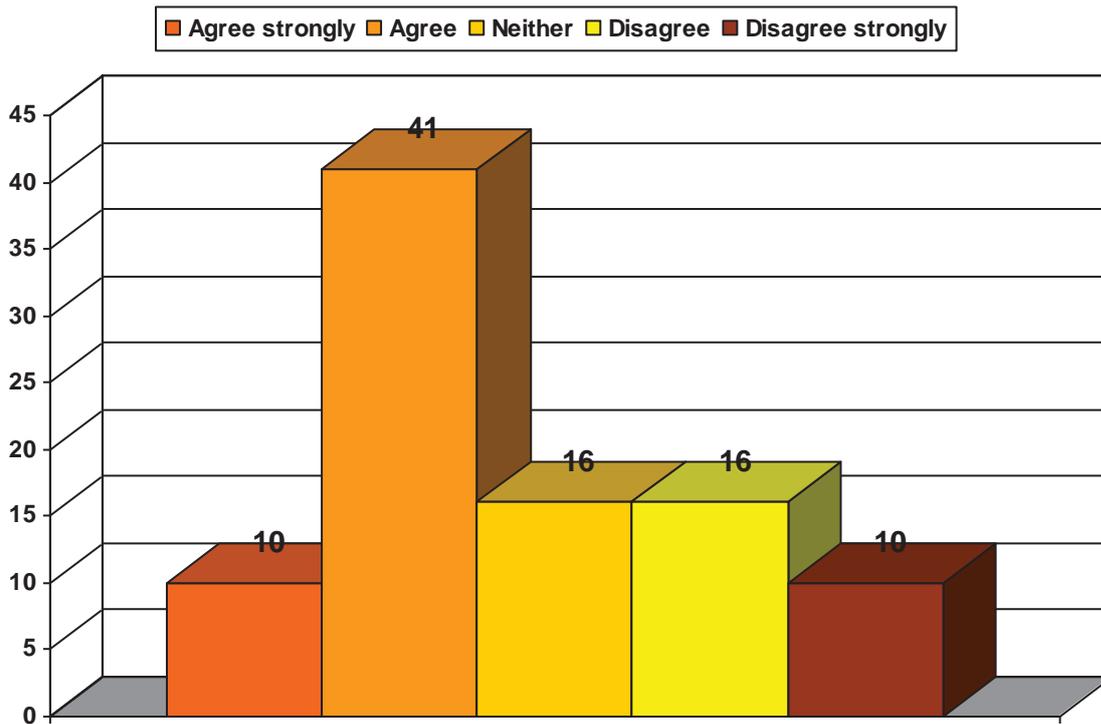
Q10. It is the responsibility of the police and the local council working in partnership to deal with youth anti-social behaviour and crime in your local area. How much would you agree or disagree that the police and local authority are dealing with youth anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area?

Base: All = 2783

Women were more likely to agree than men (54% to 49%) and **those with teenage children were also more likely**, while **Black and Asian respondents were more likely to agree than White respondents** (Figure 19).

Figure 19 Agreement that the police and local authority are dealing with youth crime and antisocial behaviour – ethnicity
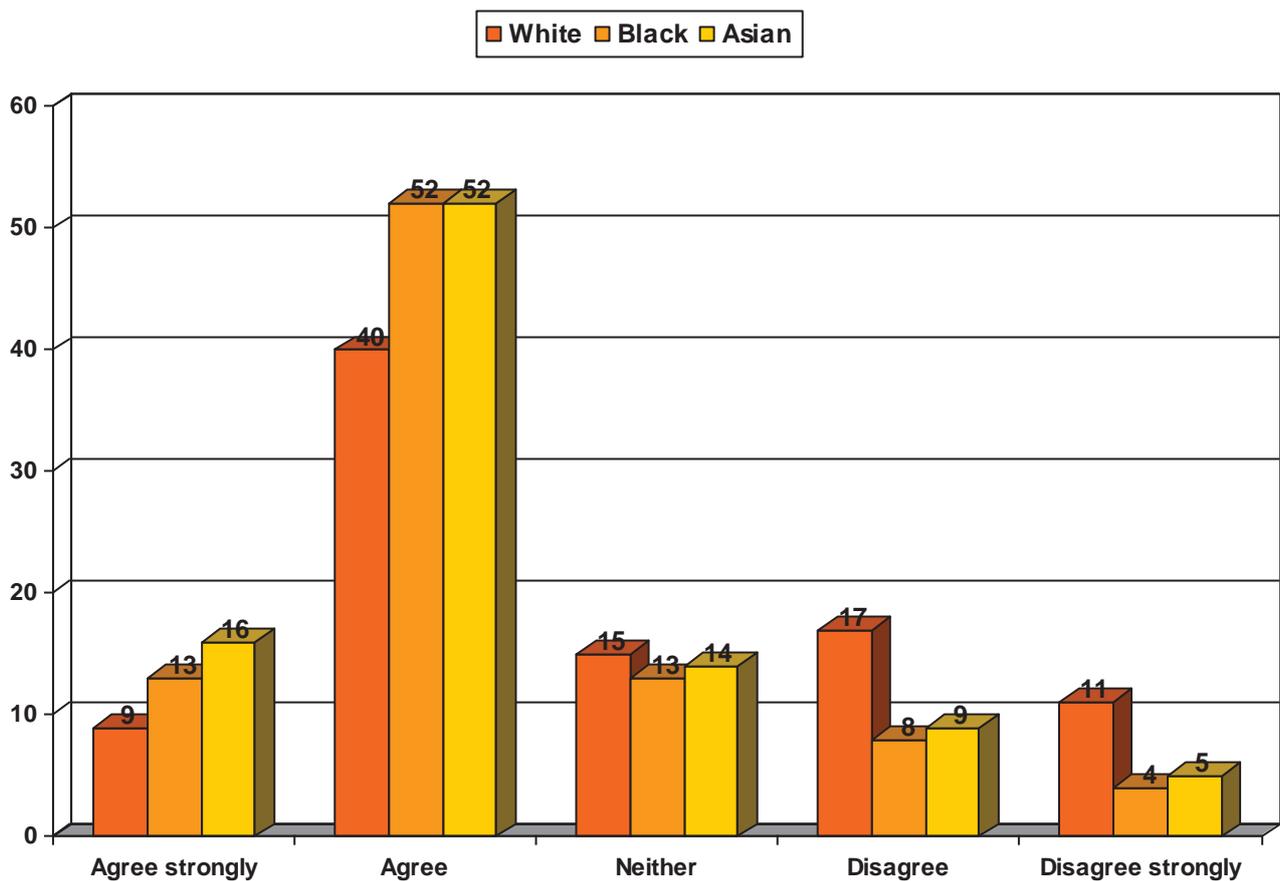
Q10. It is the responsibility of the police and the local council working in partnership to deal with youth anti-social behaviour and crime in your local area. How much would you agree or disagree that the police and local authority are dealing with youth anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area?

Base: All = 2783

Among parents of children aged 17 or over 60% agreed, compared with the overall figure of 51%, but the difference was almost all in the proportion just agreeing. As Figure 20 shows, there was almost no difference in the proportion agreeing strongly across all of the groups.

Figure 20 Agreement that the police and local authority are dealing with youth crime and antisocial behaviour – children in household
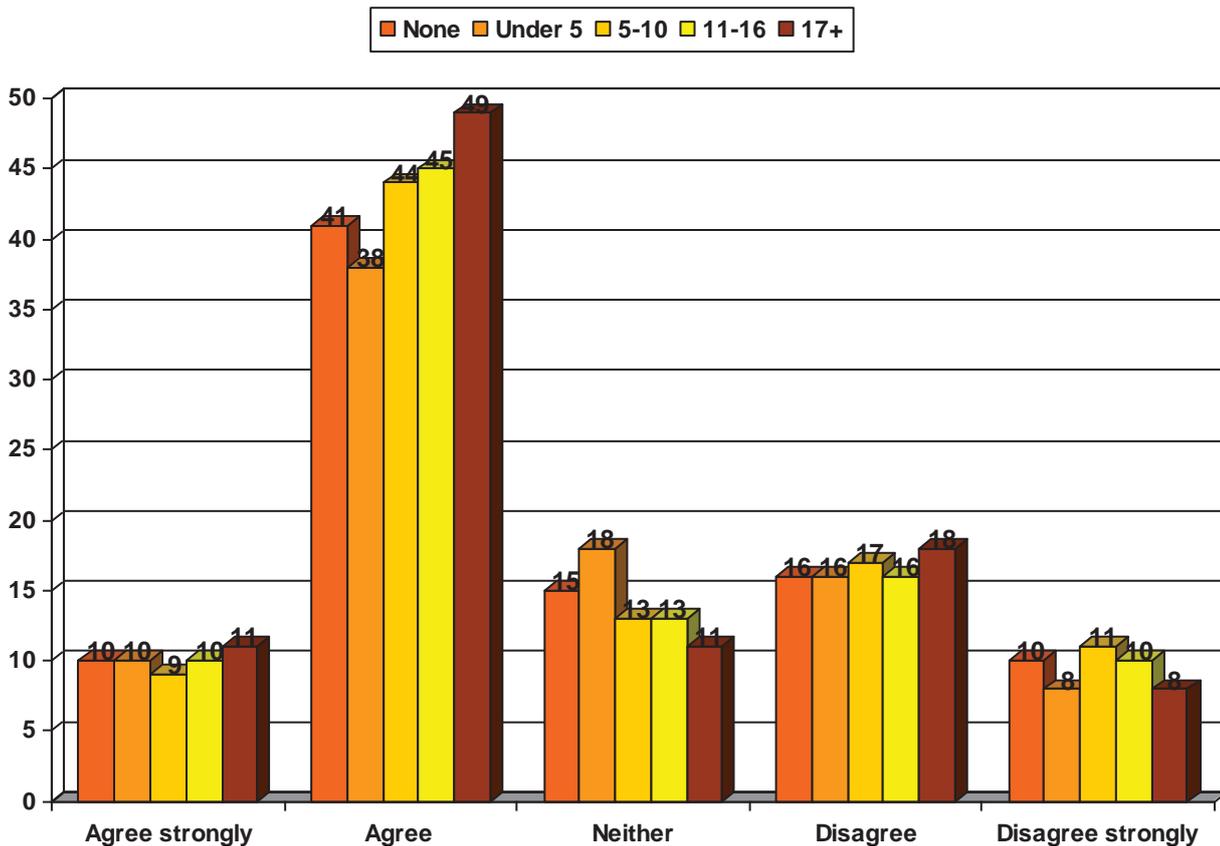

Q10. It is the responsibility of the police and the local council working in partnership to deal with youth anti-social behaviour and crime in your local area. How much would you agree or disagree that the police and local authority are dealing with youth anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area?

Base: All = 2783

Respondents were then asked whether they thought three possible ways of limiting underage drinking were good or bad ways of achieving this aim. The three approaches put forward were:

- Providing more activities for young people
- Confiscating alcohol from young people
- Making it more difficult for young people to buy alcohol

All were seen overall as very good ideas and there was relatively little difference between them. Making it harder for young people to buy alcohol was seen as a very good idea by three in four respondents (75%) while the other two were seen as very good by only three in five. However, when we add very and fairly good responses together, **providing more activities for young people, confiscation and making it more difficult for young people to buy alcohol are all seen as good ideas by at least eight in ten respondents.** Almost no-one thought any of the ideas proposed were very bad ideas, and none were seen as bad ideas by more than 7% of respondents.

Figure 21 - Ways to discourage young people from drinking too much
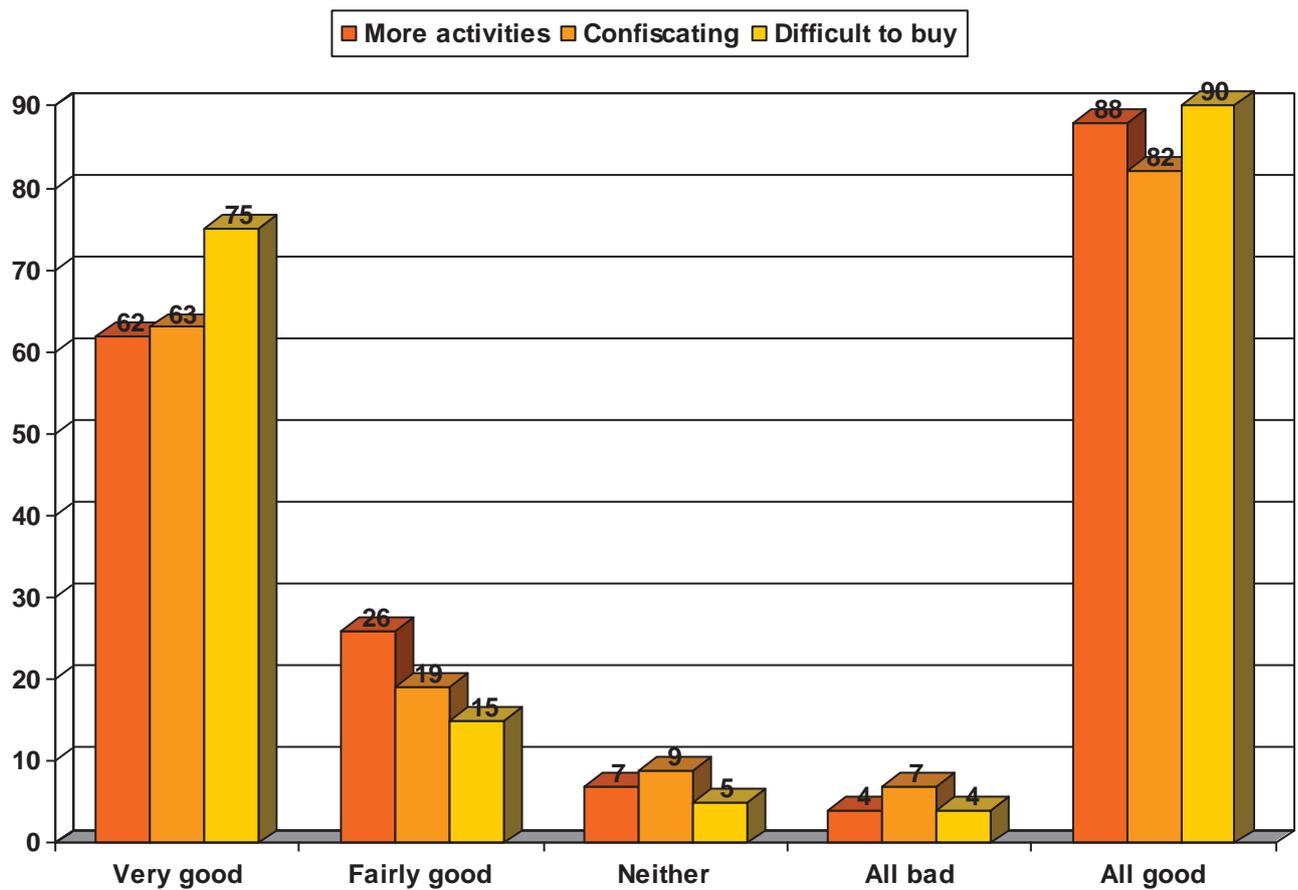
Q11. Please tell me whether you think this is a good or bad way of discouraging young people from drinking too much:

Base All = 2783

With such high approval levels there is not a great deal of scope for variation within sub-groups, but it was noticeable that 16-24 year-olds were more likely to think confiscating alcohol and making it more difficult for young people to buy alcohol were bad ideas, but even among this group the proportions thinking them bad ideas were only 12% and 6% respectively.

In similar vein, the vast majority thought more police patrols on the streets after school are a good idea to reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour – 67% thought this a very good idea and a further 22% thought it a good idea. Only 2% thought it was fairly bad and 1% very bad. Again, 16-24 year-olds were more likely to think it a bad idea, but the total for very and fairly bad was still only 6% among this group.

One of the best-known ways of dealing with youth antisocial behaviour is the use of Anti Social Behaviour Orders, or ASBOs. In 2007 around 40% of all ASBOs were issued to young people aged 10-17, and the questionnaire tested respondent awareness of this. It is not realistic to ask respondents to estimate what they think the proportion is to the nearest 10%, and so the question had to be phrased in broader terms – a tenth, a quarter, half, three-quarters and nine tenths – which means that, unfortunately, none of the answer categories offered to respondents matches the true proportion.

With that caveat in mind it is clear that **most respondents under-estimated the proportion of ASBOs that were issued against 10-17 year-olds** (Table 6). Half the respondents thought that a quarter or fewer of all ASBOs went to 10-17 year-olds, while only 22% thought the proportion was three-quarters or more.

Table 6 Proportion of ASBOs given to 10-17 year-olds

	All	16-24
	%	%
About one in ten	23	12
About a quarter	27	28
About a half	28	27
About three-quarters	15	23
About nine in ten	7	9

Q21. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders - ASBOs - can be issued to anyone from the age of ten right up to the elderly. In 2007, what proportion of ASBOs do you think were issued to young people aged 10-17? Would you say it was ...

Base All = 2783

One of the frequently heard explanations of youth antisocial behaviour – and the indeed the one that came equal top of the list of causes in this survey (see Table 5) was poor parenting, and to expand on this theme respondents were asked whether they thought local parents took enough responsibility for the behaviour of their children. This produced a more even split than might have been implied by the results in Table 5 – **39% agreed that parents in their area did take enough responsibility for their children, while 45% disagreed and said that they didn't.**

This same question is asked on the Places survey, where across England 30% agreed that parents do take enough responsibility. It is somewhat surprising that the YTF survey should get a "better" score than England overall, and if we look at results of the Places survey solely for those local authorities that contain YCAP areas the discrepancy is even greater. The places result for YCAP authorities shows only 25% agreeing that parents take enough responsibility – far less than the 39% in this survey. What makes the difference even more surprising is that the Places results cover the whole of each of the YCAP authorities, whereas the YTF survey covers only the wards where there has been targeted YCAP activity, and which can be assumed to be more deprived and have a more significant youth crime/anti-social behaviour problem. Since it is hard to suggest a reason why people in more deprived areas should think parents take more responsibility for their children than they do in less deprived ones, we have to assume that a major cause of the different results is the very different ways the two surveys are conducted, the Places survey being postal and household-based.

As on several other questions, it was the 45-64 year-olds who were the most critical – 51% of this age group disagreed that local parents took enough responsibility compared with 39% overall.

There was also a clear class correlation, with ABs more likely to agree and DEs to disagree (Figure 22).

Figure 22 Do local parents take enough responsibility for their children?
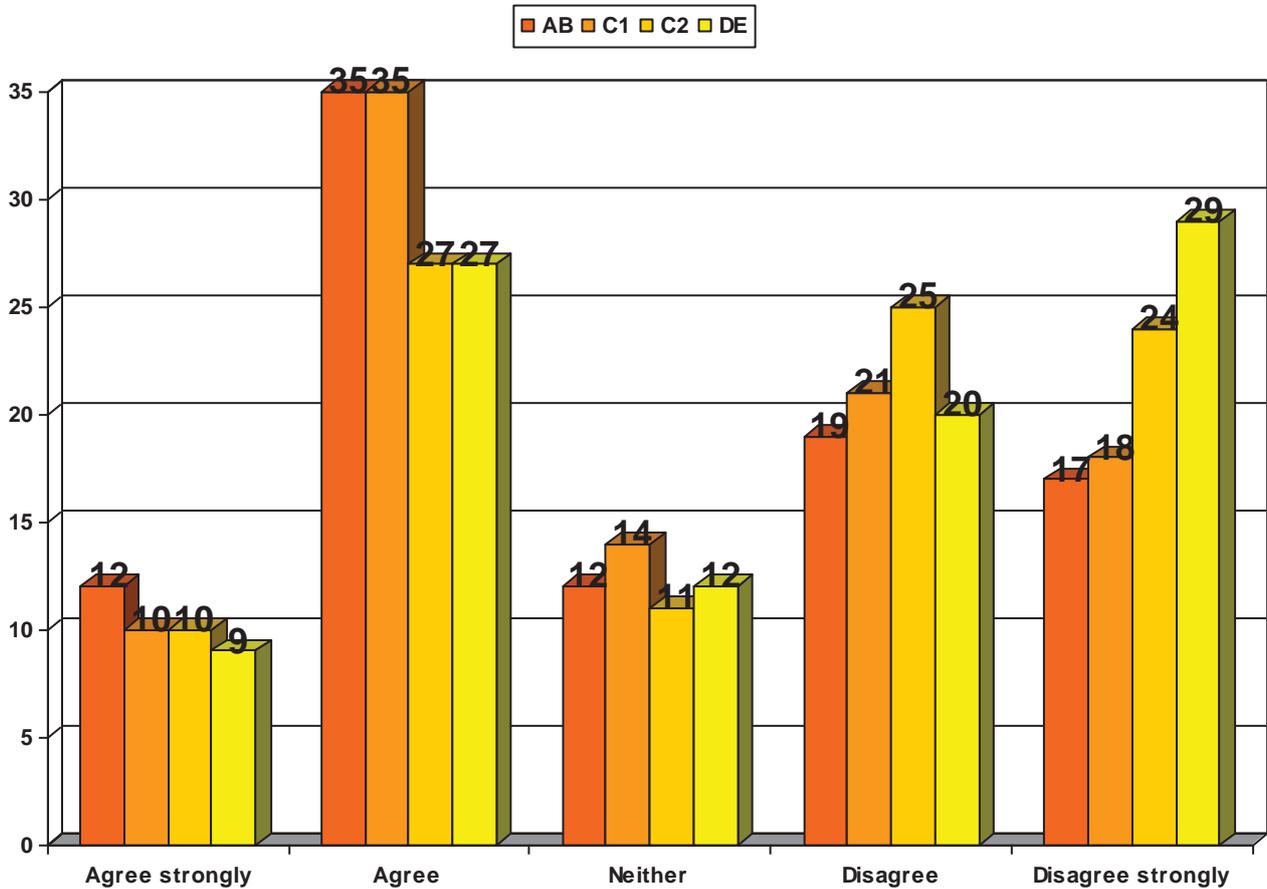
Q2. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with
"In your area parents take enough responsibility for the behaviour of their children"

Base All = 2783

Respondents were also asked if they agreed or disagreed that most teenagers are responsible and well-behaved (Figure 24)**. Overall half agreed**. 8% agreed strongly, while only a third disagreed, although 15% disagreed strongly.

The people most likely to disagree were those who were, or had recently been, teenagers: among 16-24 year-olds 50% disagreed and only 35% agreed; an almost perfect mirror image of the overall opinion.

There was again a strong class correlation, with ABs again far more tolerant and DEs far less so.

Figure 23 Are most teenagers responsible and well-behaved?
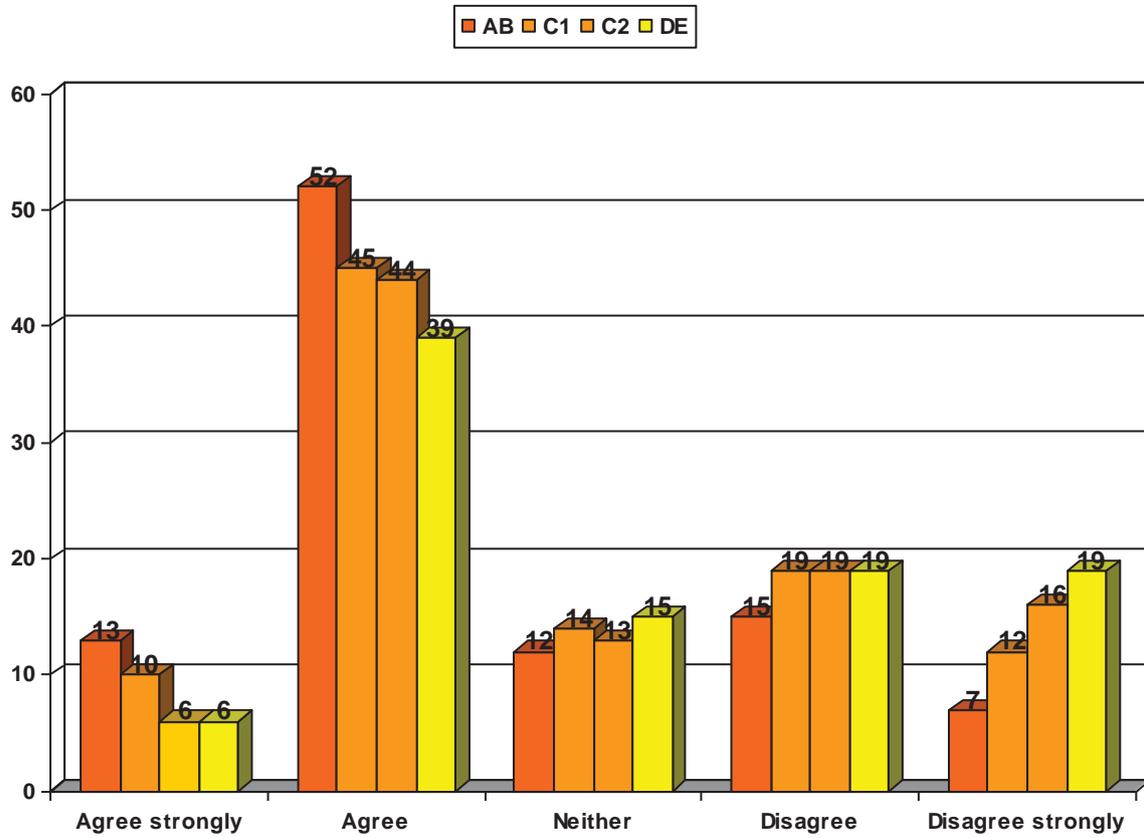
Q3. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with "Most young people are responsible and well-behaved"

Base: All = 2783

Qualitative findings

This section of the report details findings from the qualitative research with young people and looks at:

- Young people's perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour

- Young people's experiences and perceptions of alcohol use/ misuse

- Young people's views and experiences of YCAP initiatives

Research took place in five locations across England including London, the North-East, North West, West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber. Participants were selected from a number of YCAP areas in each location. In total, 60 young people aged 14-19 with varying education and employment status participated across all three stages of the research.

The qualitative research adopted a multi-stage approach to engage with participants whilst allowing them to develop their ideas and opinions on the subject matters. The three stages of the research were as follows:-

- Stage 1: Explorative pre task – participants took photographs of their area providing researchers with an insight into the key issues affecting them

- Stage 2: Collaborative clinics – 2 ½ hour group discussions were held in each location to explore perceptions of ASB and alcohol use/ misuse

- Stage 3: Online activity board – 3 day activity board with further group discussions and individual activities, examining wider perceptions and influences affecting young people's views on crime, ASB and alcohol use/ misuse

The information collected at each stage fed into the next stage and built upon the previously generated ideas.

Prior to attending a collaborative clinic, all participants collected images of positive and negative aspects of their area and sent them to GfK NOP. During the clinics, these images were used by researchers to inform discussions about anti-social behaviour. In the clinics, participants discussed a range of issues related to crime, anti-social behaviour and alcohol use.

Images and media were used to stimulate debate and discussion and the themes emerging from the clinics were used to develop subjects for discussion on a subsequent online activity board. Following the clinics, a selection of participants were asked to log on to an online activity board where further discussion took place on specific questions and themes and participants were able to upload images and materials they had collected themselves.

Perceptions of Crime and Anti-social behaviour - Setting the Scene

During the research, all participants were asked to comment on a series of photographs taken by young people (during the pre-task exercise) of scenes from different cities across the UK, including the city where they lived (London, Newcastle, Leeds, Birmingham and Manchester).

Following broad discussion of ASB and youth crime in the collaborative clinics and having looked at the photographs from the different areas, participants recognised that there were similar problems across England. They commented that ASB, including criminal activities such as vandalism and graffiti, were a serious concern for young people as well as older people. Although each photograph was taken in a different city, most young people could recognise similar anti-social activities that happen where they live from each photograph.

> *'I think that all the areas have their similarities. I feel that all the areas have been run down and vandalised by the crimes of youths such as graffiti and littering. I feel that local authorities can't do much to prevent these crimes as the youths of today have got nothing better to do with their free time as there is very little to do and not many places open for the youth to go to.' (Manchester 16-17)*

It was assumed by participants that young people were responsible for the vandalism and graffiti in the pictures that they were asked to look at. However, it was said that **a minority of young people were involved in crime and ASB** which resulted in other young people, who most research participants identified with, getting a bad reputation. Participants did not think that this was a fair way to judge young people.

Most young people felt that something should be done to stop crime and ASB as they can give an area a bad reputation. Although participants found it difficult to identify ways in which crime and ASB could be tackled, **many felt it was the responsibility of the 'authorities' to take action**. A small number of young people also felt that the community should play a part in addressing youth crime and ASB, specifically calling on other young people to help the authorities tackle local problems.

'This [antisocial behaviour] is a serious issue that should be tackled by the government and authorities.' (London 16-17)

Evidence of ASB was thought to be an indication of a 'run down area', where there was little support offered to young people and families living in the area who needed it.

Community initiatives and local facilities such as community centres and youth clubs, gyms and sports facilities (where activities could be subsidised or provided at cheap rates, for instance through a voucher system for young people) **were suggested as ways in which problems associated with youth crime and ASB could be tackled by people in their own communities.** Financial assistance to families was also suggested, allowing young people to do activities that would normally be too expensive for them, such as going to the cinema or bowling.

"Maybe if the government acted on this with more youth activities the crime could possibly decrease and also maybe by helping families that are less able to give money to their children regularly could also help as they could go to the cinema or something else that is constructive." (London 16-17)

"Anti-social behaviour is happening in most areas of the UK not just one area. I don't think enough is being done about the situation. I think there are not enough activities and things going on for young people today so many of them just hang around the streets and get themselves into trouble." (Newcastle 18-19)

These responses indicated that participants felt that youth crime and ASB was not just a problem in their local area.

Young people were keen to note that whilst some young people were involved in crime and ASB, not all young people were. In addition to this they felt that young people were widely seen as being responsible for much ASB and believed this to be unfair. The online board further explored media representations[6] of young people. During these discussions, young people stated that they often felt stereotyped as the social group most likely to commit ASB.

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[6] Further findings regarding media representation are included in the appendix.

The Crime/Anti-Social Behaviour Spectrum

An aim of the research was to understand how young people defined ASB specifically. The majority of young people agreed with the Home Office definition of ASB, given on the "What is ASB?" page on the Home Office website as:-

> 'Virtually any intimidating' or threatening activity that scares you or damages your quality of life'.

Despite a general agreement with this statement, many questioned whether some activities generally categorised as antisocial were actually 'intimidating or threatening'. Some young people noted that the Home Office definition above was open to interpretation, as what some people may consider intimidating or threatening, may not be to others. **It was suggested by some young people that an activity should only be classified as antisocial if the perpetrator intended to threaten or intimidate someone else.**

> *"I think it's very broad. What intimidates to one person might not intimidate another so how do you define intimidating?"(Newcastle 18-19)*

> *"If you're deliberately intimidating someone, or if you're deliberately threatening someone, that's anti-social." (London 16-17)*

> *"Intentionally doing something bad, rather than just being dressed in a hood or being in a park." (Manchester 16-17)*

> *"It's when some people damage the environment they live in; an act that's done without a purpose in mind." (Leeds 14-16)*

The use of the phrase 'virtually any…act' in the Home Office definition of ASB raised questions regarding the broadness of the ASB spectrum. Young people were very aware that there were common perceptions of what constituted ASB, and this was often reflected in their spontaneous views on what was deemed an antisocial activity. Participants frequently referenced activities such as graffiti or hanging around in large groups in their initial categorisations of ASB.

However, it appeared that using such an open classification meant that young people described activities as ASB even when they did not feel that the activity fell comfortably into this category. This resulted in a widening of young people's definition of ASB to include low level irritants and serious criminal activities.

"People make it sound well worse than it is anti-social behaviour. If they see anyone in a hood they think they're going to mug you." (Manchester 16-17)

Throughout the research it emerged that on either side of the ASB spectrum were activities that the young people deemed to be too severe or not severe enough to fit into the definition of ASB. Activities were grouped as follows:-

- **Nuisance behaviour -** These were activities that were not deemed by the young people to be antisocial in themselves as they were seen as having a very limited effect on others. Some nuisance behaviours were accepted to be pre-cursors to ASB under certain circumstances.

- **ASB -** Activities described as ASB were fairly wide ranging and were spread across the scale in terms of their severity, depending on what was involved and how it affected other people.

- **Crime –** These activities involved an act that definitely broke the law. A number of activities that had originally been classified as ASB were later said to also fall under the 'crime' definition when this was given as a potential alternative in the group discussions. Although certain types of crime were seen to be primarily associated with young people, there was a general consensus that adults were more likely to be involved in most activities defined as crime.

"Crime is a law given by the government and anti-social behaviour is kind of like behaviour that is seen as deviant by society." (London 16-17)

The following diagram outlines how young people separated different behaviours across the three categories:

Nuisance

Crime

Drinking on the street

Assault/ GBH

Fighting

Shouting on the street

Theft

Begging

Mugging

Trespassing

Listening to loudspeaker music

Graffiti

Setting fires

Vandalism

Buying/selling drugs

Rowdy neighbours

Owning a 'dangerous' dog

Large groups

Knife/gun crime

Speeding

Joyriding

Low level antisocial behaviour

Anti-social behaviour

High level antisocial behaviour

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Relationships between types of ASB and Crime

Participants drew distinctions between nuisance behaviour, anti-social activity and crimes. **Young people frequently suggested that ASB was likely to incorporate a number of activities working in conjunction with each other, whereas a crime was associated with one definitive act of breaking the law**. There was a general view that some less severe nuisance or anti-social activities could lead to higher level ASB or even crime. **Overall young people noted a number of links between these different types of activities; these links were both direct and indirect.**

"[ASB] is not just one problem. It's a whole load of problems." (Newcastle 18-19)

"Alcohol could make you go do something which is criminal so it all kind of ties in together." (London 16-17)

The following diagram outlines how activities were related across the categories:
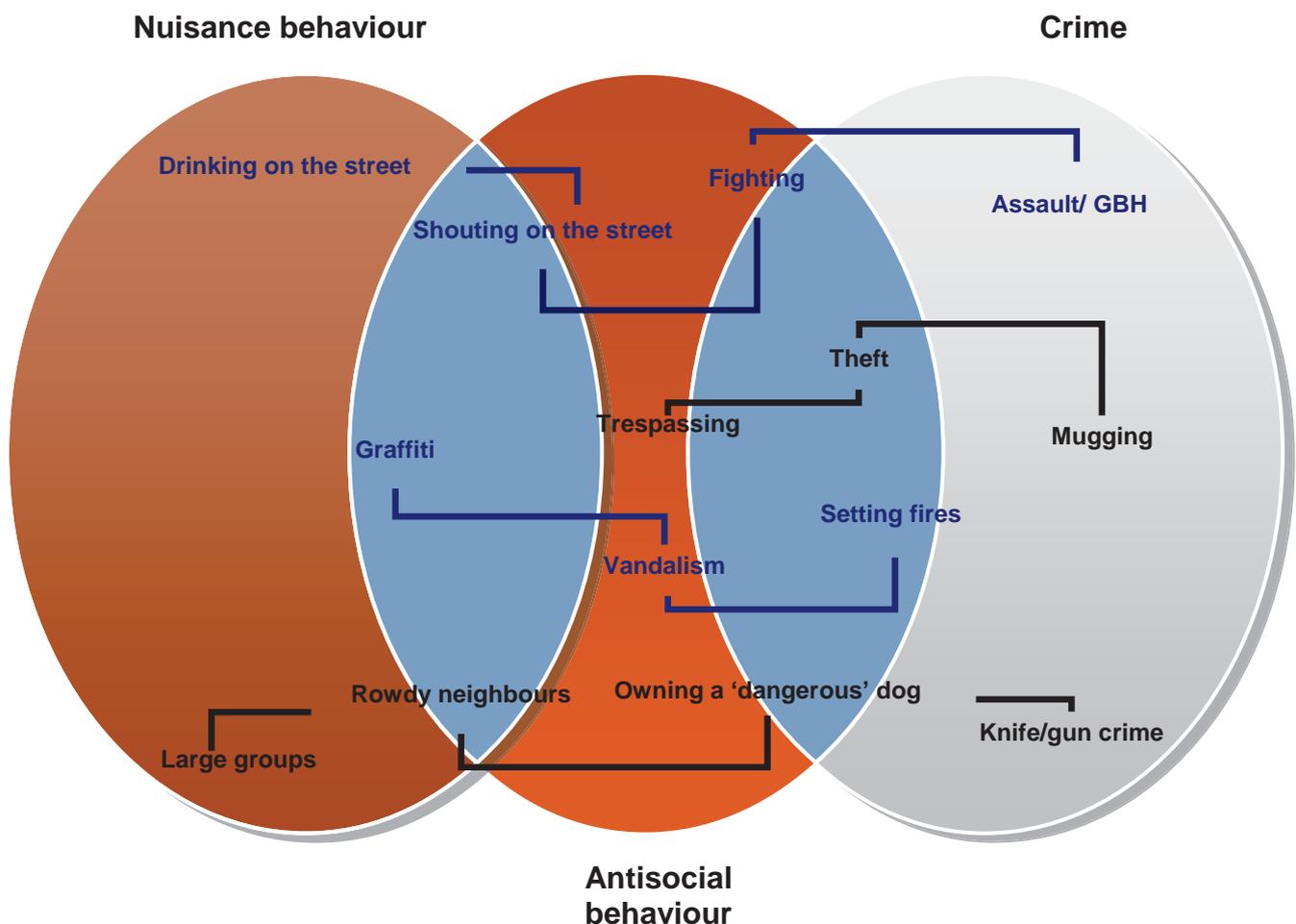
At the most direct end of the spectrum, activities appeared to have a causal relationship. So, for example, 'drinking on the street' could lead to aggressive behaviour and eventually lead to 'assault or GBH'. Where participants were able to draw direct causal relationships, this was often because they had experienced one or more of these activities themselves.

> *"Some people turn angry when they've had a drink don't they start like shouting in the streets … Some people don't know when to stop and then they're fighting and causing arguments for any reason." (Newcastle 18-19)*

> *"If you drink too much you might get out of hand and violent and stuff." (Leeds 14-16)*

There were also some activities that were connected by category rather than having a causal relationship. These activities had direct typological relationships. For example, 'graffiti' and 'setting fires' were both considered to be acts of vandalism. However, these activities were seen at opposite ends of the scale in terms of severity.

> *"[Vandalism is] like graffiti, litter, bus stops broken. It's going to give [the local area] a bad name cos it doesn't look very nice." (Newcastle 18-19)*

There were also activities that had indirect links to each other in that they were only related under particular circumstances. At a more indirect level, participants drew relationships based on associated activities. For example, they may involve the same types of people or fall into the same general category of activity. So trespassing, theft and mugging, although not directly linked, may all involve a person intending to steal something. They were thereby related by association and the intent, or potential intent of the activity.

At the most indirect end of the scale, **participants appeared to draw on preconceptions about young people to draw links between certain activities.** For example, if a large group was what the participants considered to be a gang, they could also be involved in other associated activities such as being a rowdy neighbour, owning a dangerous dog or involved in gun and knife crime.

Factors affecting definitions of criminal or anti-social activities

Young people were encouraged to consider the circumstances under which an activity could be categorised as anti-social, and when it might fall outside of this. Across the research, there was an overall consensus that whether an activity could be defined as antisocial or not depended on the following:-

- **Who** was involved in the activity

- **Where** the activity took place

- **Why** people were engaging the activity

- **How** the activity affects others

- **When** the activity took place

<u>Who</u> <u>is involved?</u>

Participants overwhelmingly felt that young people in general were blamed by the government and the media for both nuisance and anti-social activities. There was a general consensus that young people were stereotyped and, as a result of this, they themselves felt that they were often targeted for no reason. This was a problem for the majority of participants, but particularly for two Black males in London who were often subject to stop and search by the police.

> *"It's a violation of your civil liberties." (London 16-17)*

> *"If you're out police or security guards will always watch you." (Newcastle 18-19)*

However, there was a common view that those who were involved in anti-social activities were more likely to be either under 18 (and under the legal age for activities such as buying alcohol) or from families where bad behaviour was ignored or acceptable.   It was also suggested that older people who were involved in crime or ASB had an influence on younger teenagers who saw them as role models. This could lead to young teenagers becoming involved in more severe ASB, and eventually, in criminal activity, such as buying and selling drugs.

"They probably start off younger now. Like early teens and stuff. It's like when kids have been hanging round with older people, they've started doing it from a younger age." (Newcastle 18-19)

Participants across the age groups (14 to 19) reasoned that younger teenagers were more likely to be involved in ASB than older teenagers because their local area lacked facilities and activities for young people. In contrast, older teenagers were seen as less likely to be hanging around on the streets, causing ASB. Because they were older, they were able to get served in pubs and more likely to be working, so having money to go to the cinema, bowling or to do other activities.

However, where facilities such as youth clubs were available, it was recognised that those organising them did not have enough money to provide a range of activities and outings and they were often described as 'boring'. There was therefore a contradiction in the views of the young people researched. On the one hand, they wanted more facilities for young people to be provided in their area but on the other they did not want to attend the ones that were available because they did not feel they were satisfying their needs. In one location, some youth clubs were described as dangerous as local gang members also went to them.

"I mean youth clubs and that, there's one near us but its like, there's not much to do there." (Birmingham 14-16)

Younger teenagers, particularly those aged 14-16, and still in full time education, reported wanting to be able to take part in more 'adult' activities, such as drinking alcohol or going to clubs. **The lack of legitimate venues for their age group meant that they were often taking part in these activities outdoors.** They felt that being under-age meant that if they were seen doing any of these things, their actions were immediately deemed as anti-social. **There appeared to be a transitional period after leaving compulsory education when young people, although still technically under-age, felt more legitimate when partaking in these activities**.

"The government aren't going to set up a local place for young children to drink so it's kind of a hard one to do." (Birmingham 14-16)

It was suggested that young people who had been raised without a strong moral foundation were also more likely to be involved in crime and ASB. These young people were more likely to live in places where crime and ASB were particularly problematic, such as housing estates. It was suggested that these young people would be more prone to crime and ASB as they would be happening around them constantly. They were also viewed as more likely to have friends that were involved in these activities, and to follow in their footsteps.

Despite this, **participants tended to distinguish themselves from other 'types' of young people when discussing youth crime and ASB**. Despite the assumptions about who was more likely to be involved in criminal and anti-social behaviours, participants who also lived on housing estates distinguished themselves from young people committing ASB locally. They felt that they had been raised 'properly', that they had received moral guidance from family and friends and had therefore not become involved in crime or ASB.

> *"Parents just let their kids do anything no matter how old they are. You see four year olds running around the streets with no parental supervision." (Newcastle 18-19)*

> *"If you see a group of posh kids you're not going to feel threatened are you? Posh kids probably wouldn't even do that sort of thing anyway … because they're posh!" (London 16-17)*

> *"If they look chavvy, like hoodies and all sorts … They wouldn't look intimidating if they were girls who were all girly girly." (Birmingham 14-16)*

Where does it take place?

Participants generally agreed that for an activity to be antisocial it had to happen in a place where it could be seen by other people. This was particularly related to hanging around in large groups or drinking, but also to associated activities. **Participants distinguished between engaging in antisocial activities in communal areas and remote areas such as parks and fields, which were usually empty at night. Participants tended to go to quiet areas in order to avoid other people.** However, this was primarily so that they would not be disturbed or interrupted, rather than because they wished to avoid affecting other people.

There was a common view that young people were aware of local places to go late at night to avoid others.

> *"Underage drinking is [ASB], but not drinking in the park."* (Manchester 16-17)

> *"Park or like an alley or something where it's dark so no-one can see you."* (Birmingham 14-16)

Participants also distinguished between quiet areas that were used by others and busy areas such as town or city centres. Some felt that activities were less likely to be anti-social in they took place in busier areas because there were more people around so others were likely to feel safer. In busier areas, people were less likely to come into direct contact with an 'anti-social' activity as it was easier to put distance between themselves and the perpetrators. **The majority of participants recognised that, despite avoiding contact with other people, the places they chose to congregate with their friends were sometimes areas that others had to walk past.** They acknowledged that a lone person walking past an area such as this was more likely to feel intimidated, and some felt that they would also feel intimidated under these circumstances. Therefore, there was recognition on the part of young people that their presence and behaviour could have an intimidating effect on others.

> *"It depends on where they are as well…if you're in the city centre it's not really intimidating cos there's hundreds of people but if it's really dark and they're on like a little track and they're blocking the track and you have to go down there it's really intimidating."* (Newcastle 18-19)

> *"Sometimes when you're in a group you can be doing something quite innocent like just sitting and talking and you know that someone walking by might be intimidated but you're not going to do anything."* (London 16-17)

There was a **general awareness that, even when young people congregated in places away from others, they could still behave in a criminal or anti-social manner amongst themselves**. This was usually when they had been drinking and were more likely to get into arguments and fights. However, these activities were less likely to be deemed as anti-social if they did not have an affect on people outside of the peer group.

> *"It can get out of hand really quickly. Because fights start and everyone gets involved … but if you stay out of the park at night you won't know about it. So it can't be that bad."* (Birmingham 14-16)

Why do people do it?

As previously mentioned, an activity was more likely to be described by young people as anti-social if there was an intention to affect other people. **There was widespread agreement that most young people were involved in these activities out of boredom rather than an intention to be anti-social.** This was particularly the case for low level ASB and nuisance behaviours (see diagram on p.57), which were often thought to have limited effect on others. However, some young people admitted to being involved in more serious ASB or crime as a result of boredom. This was said to be particularly the case when young people were under the influence of alcohol, and were more likely to express their boredom by becoming increasingly anti-social.

> *"I've seen someone throw a brick at a window … …they just did it because they were bored, I think they just wanted someone to chase them." (Birmingham 14-16)*

Questions were raised regarding the purpose of specific activities, particularly graffiti. Participants pointed out that graffiti could have many different purposes, including being artistic. **Most felt that it was acceptable to graffiti if it was artistic or for a particular purpose**; for example, in London young people had written messages on walls where young people had died. However, **graffiti was far less acceptable when it was seen as meaningless or offensive**. Some examples of this were gang tags, swearing or making remarks about other people.

> *"No one really minds about [graffiti] anymore. Sometimes they do nice ones." (Birmingham 14-16)*

> *"Sometimes they graffiti about people. When they swear and stuff that doesn't look good. They're just trying to make their mark." (Birmingham 14-16)*

How does it affect others?

Young people were aware that criminal and anti-social activities had an effect on how people viewed their local area. **Participants often felt that other people avoided the areas they lived in and thought of the area as being 'rough' as a result of visible evidence of anti-social behaviour, such as graffiti and vandalism.** The majority of participants were also aware that their actions may appear threatening and intimidating to other people. Despite this most felt that young people were not to blame for the type of activities that would make others feel this way about their area. High level ASB and crime (see diagram on p.57) were thought to be primarily responsible for giving areas a bad reputation.

These activities also affected the way young people felt about where they lived.

"It's not nice. It makes it look like a rough area." (Manchester 16-17)

"People our age will probably start to think that [buying and selling drugs] is [ASB] because it's affecting everyone." (Newcastle 18-19)

Although a number of participants admitted being involved in some forms of crime of ASB, this was typically low level antisocial or nuisance behaviour, which they felt were less likely to affect other people. As these activities were often very common in their area, young people tended to be desensitised to them. Despite this, it appeared that participants did recognise that even what they considered to be low level ASB could have a negative affect on a local area. For example, although their views about graffiti were mixed, they noted that graffiti was amongst the things that they disliked about where they lived.

When does it happen?

Across the locations, **participants agreed that there were limited facilities and activities for young people, particularly in the evenings, at weekends and on school holidays**. The overall view was that **ASB was more likely to take place at these times as young people had nowhere to go and nothing to do**. There was a general consensus, particularly amongst younger teenagers, that the **facilities and venues available to them closed too early**. Resultantly they felt that they were forced to hang around outside, as there was usually nowhere else for them to go.

"You have to go to the local area because your parents are in your house. Your parents aren't going to be happy if they see you drinking. It's kind of like secretive." (Birmingham 14-16)

Young people were aware that they may appear more intimidating to others if they were doing something at night rather than during the daytime. **Some suggested that their activities were more likely to be seen as anti-social by others during hours of darkness, as this was a time when people were more likely to generally feel uncomfortable.**

"If you're out at night and you got your hoods up then people are going to be a bit intimidated by you, if you're out during the day and you're just there walking along no-one's really going to be bothered." (Birmingham 14-16)

'Types' of Anti-Social Behaviour

The research centred on a number of potentially anti-social behaviours for exploration in the research. These included:-

- Graffiti

- Hanging around in large groups

- Listening to music on a bus through a mobile phone loudspeaker

- Owning a 'dangerous dog'

- Buying/selling drugs on the street

- Drinking on the street

- Vandalism

- Rowdy neighbours

Participants were asked to consider these behaviours from different points of view, specifically from the perspectives of different groups in society including: young people; government; parents; elderly neighbours.

Participants were asked to decide whether they thought these different groups would consider the behaviours outlined above as anti-social:

- *Young people* – **Participants appeared to absorb many of the stereotypes regarding ASB and young people** in the way they reflected upon the behaviours listed. However, they still felt that young people, including themselves were targeted by authority figures when it came to ASB. **Participants commented that young people could be both victims and perpetrators of ASB**. They drew on differences between types of young people and suggested reasons why ASB might occur amongst certain groups.

- *Government* – Participants generally concluded that the government would see all of the listed behaviours as ASB. There was a general **consensus that the government saw ASB as a hassle,** as dealing with these issues took up time and resources. **It was recognised that the government were trying to tackle ASB. However, their efforts were often thought to have a limited effect.**

- *Parents* – There was a **clear distinction between the perspectives of parents who were concerned about their children, and the perspectives of parents who were less concerned about what their children did**, or were involved in ASB themselves. The latter were often seen as contributing to the continuation of ASB through their children.

- *Elderly neighbours* – **Participants generally agreed that older people would feel threatened and intimidated by all of the behaviours listed**, and describe them all as ASB. Many participants also commented that older people would have strong views on how young people had changed over time. It was suggested that older people would be quick to note that they had not been involved in similar activities when they were younger.

It was clear that for almost all of the activities outlined above, **participants tended to distinguish their own views/ views of young people from those of 'authority figures'.** Young people felt that authority figures were likely to always deem these activities as ASB, and typically blamed young people for them. Specific comments on each of the activities are outlined below.

Graffiti was a common issue across the locations and recognised as an issue in participants' local areas. During the online diary exercise (which spanned three days), the majority of participants had noticed graffiti in their local area (see photographs taken by participants below).
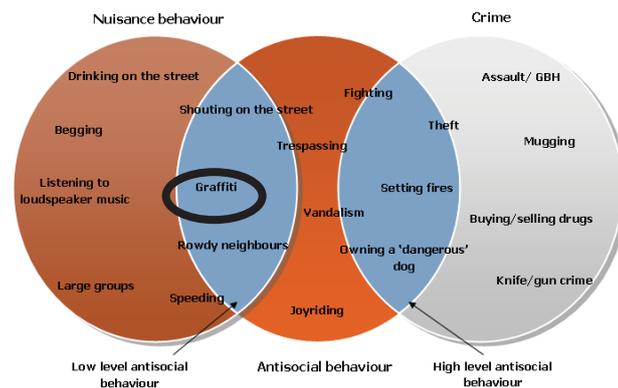
Although most participants had not necessarily seen people spraying the walls, they assumed that it was young people who had graffitied.

"As I got into my area I never saw any evidence of anti-social behaviour except that of graffiti, but the graffiti I saw as harmless rather than intimidating. Personally don't class it as ASB; it's more depending on the motive of the person." (London 16-17)
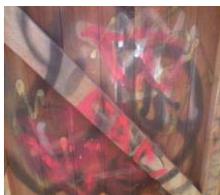
Where participants had been involved in graffiti themselves, it was likely to be small scale, for example writing on walls rather than spray painting. Graffiti was seen as low level ASB by the majority of participants across all age groups, genders and locations. Not all participants disliked the graffiti they saw in their local area however they recognised that it communicated a negative impression about the neighbourhood.

"A good thing can be marred by graffiti…but graffiti isn't always necessarily an antisocial act. Unless its motive is to affect other members the public, harmless graffiti can be seen as artistic and an expression of freedom." (London 16-17)

Young people noted that **graffiti was often seen in areas where other vandalism had also taken place**. For example in public toilets, community sports facilities or on public transport. However, some participants pointed to instances when graffiti could become an issue for young people, for example when it was used to incite 'gang wars', which was raised as an issue in London.

Participants observed the effect that graffiti had on other people and on the local area, citing rises in taxes and damaging the image of the community as reasons why some people may see it as ASB. It was suggested that increased activities for young people, such as legal graffiti walls, may help to tackle the issue.

The image below provides a summary of how young people felt that government, parents, elderly neighbours and young people themselves viewed graffiti.
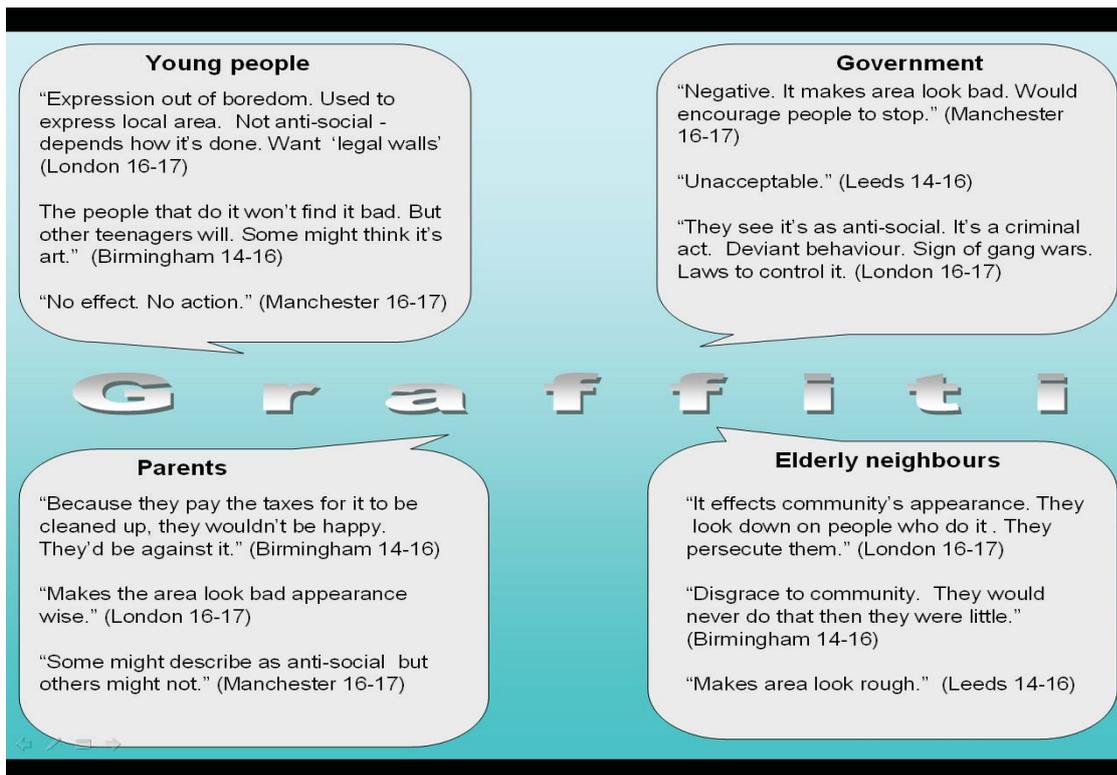
Large groups

Hanging around in large groups, although considered by the young people as nuisance behaviour rather than ASB, was raised as an issue across locations and age groups. **All young people noted that young people congregated in large groups in their local areas.** They reported that they often saw large groups outside shops, on street corners, in shopping centres and in parks and public areas (see participant photographs below).
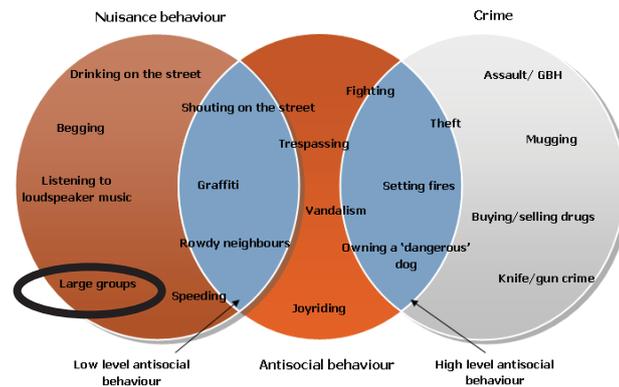
Many participants, particularly those under the age of 18 years, noted that they themselves often hung around in large groups. They recognised that their presence could be intimidating to others, including other young people but did not personally feel that they were a threat to others.

Female participants were more likely to comment on the potential threat of large groups, although were equally likely to congregate in large groups. Male participants also reported feeling vulnerable around larger groups when they themselves were in smaller groups or alone.

It was reasoned that young people often felt safer themselves in large group, and usually preferred to be around many friends. For these reasons, participants did not generally view being in large groups as problematic, and often resented being split up without good reason.

Some participants commented that the wider repercussions of large groups being on the streets could include both younger people and adults avoiding certain areas and generally feeling unsafe. They observed that large groups of youths may appear threatening to others and **participants commented that they tended to avoid large groups when they themselves were alone**.

> _"I try walking through streets instead of big paths, through all the houses." (Newcastle 18-19)_

The image below provides a summary of how young people felt that government, parents, elderly neighbours and young people themselves viewed large groups.
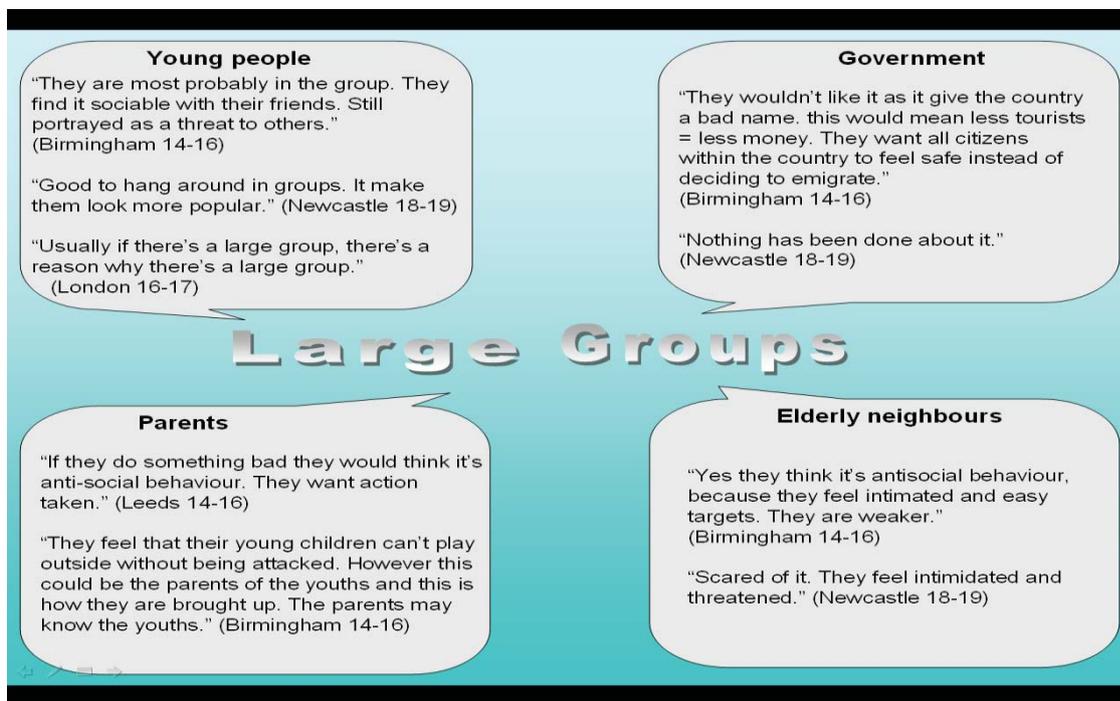
Listening to loudspeaker music

Playing music though a (mobile phone) loudspeaker was described as nuisance behaviour. The majority of participants reported experiencing or taking part in this activity. Although it was recognised by some participants that this activity could be 'annoying' to others, it was generally felt, particularly amongst the younger participants, aged 14-16 years old, that they should be able to play music in this way. Participants aged 18-19 years old were more likely to view this activity as an annoyance, but did not consider it to be ASB.
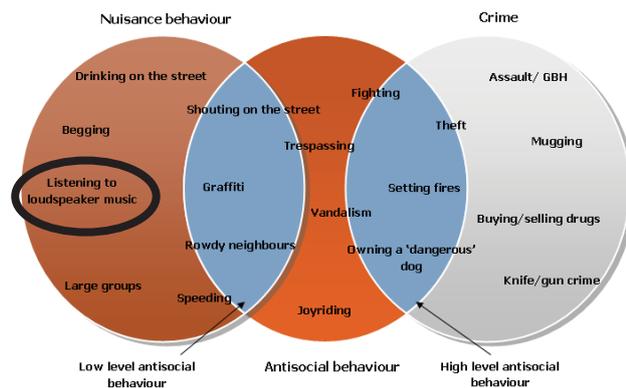
It was suggested that authority figures such as the government were likely to place this activity very low down on the list of priorities when tackling ASB and were therefore unlikely to do anything about it. However, it was understood that other groups of people in society – particularly elderly people could potentially feel that this activity was disruptive and antisocial.

The image below provides a summary of how young people felt that government, parents, elderly neighbours and young people themselves viewed loudspeaker music on a bus.

Owning a 'dangerous' dog

Opinions over owning a dangerous dog were divided. Female participants were more likely to describe this as ASB compared to male participants. A number of female participants mentioned 'animal cruelty', and felt that dogs were bred to be

dangerous rather than being naturally dangerous. Some male participants commented that owning a dangerous dog was viewed as a status symbol by young males. **Across the genders, if was recognised that young people often used dangerous dogs as a form of protection.**
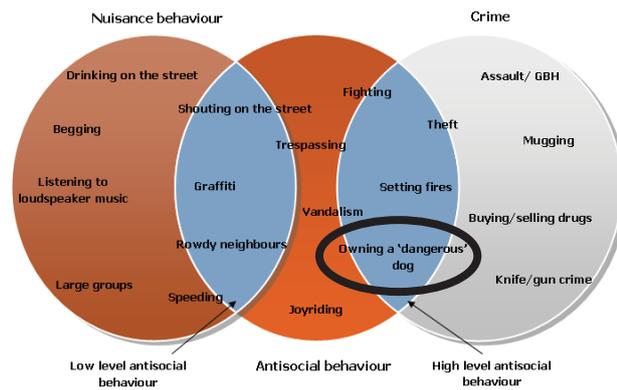
Participants aged over 16 years were more likely to report having come into contact with dangerous dogs compared to those aged 14-15 years old. However it also emerged that participants living in particular types of area, such as housing estates were more aware of the issues surrounding dangerous dogs. Overall, relatively few participants regularly came into contact with dangerous dogs.

Participants commonly saw dangerous dogs as a serious form of ASB (see diagram above). There was widespread recognition that this activity was a threat to others, although, **young people struggled to identify ways in which this issue could be tackled.**

The image below provides a summary of how young people felt that government, parents, elderly neighbours and young people themselves viewed owning a dangerous dog.

Young people

"They think it's great and that they look good with a dangerous dog." (Newcastle 18-19)

"People that have had harder upbringings, bullies and mostly boys agree that having a dog isn't a problem. Posh girls or boys and better educated young people would be against having dogs." (London 16-17)

"They feel intimidated… [but] might get influenced." (Leeds 14-16)

Government

"It takes our country look bad." … [The government] fear for the public. (Leeds 14-16)

"Yes they do think it's anti-social behaviour." (Newcastle 18-19)

"The government can't do much as they're easily persuaded that dangerous dogs aren't present at an address." (London 16-17)

Owning a 'dangerous dog'

Parents

"Most parents don't know the full extent of the danger their dogs could cause, and are usually happy enough if their daughter/son is looking after the dog properly as they think it's their child's responsibility." (London 16-17)

"Fear for their children because of what they hear on the news." (Leeds 14-16)

"Some parents don't care." (Leeds 14-16)

Elderly neighbours

"They are against dangerous dogs as they're intimidating to young people, so elderly people must be terrified. Also the noise and aggression of the dog could really cause harm and definitely intimidation." (London 16-17)

"It's changed since they were younger. There is less of a community." (Leeds 14-16)

Buying/selling drugs

Although relatively few participants had come into direct contact with those who bought or sold drugs, **there was high awareness that this activity happened in their local area.** Drugs were raised as an issue in all locations and with all age groups and genders across the research. **Participants thought that young people could find it easy to**

become involved in drugs, particularly if they were directly exposed to the buying and/or selling of drugs where they lived. Many thought that older people tended to get teenagers involved in drugs at a young age and participants were aware that becoming involved in this activity was likely to be a serious long term issue. However, despite being classified as a criminal activity, participants tended to view buying or selling drugs as an issue for the individuals involved rather than something that affected them personally. Young people felt that this issue was likely to be a high priority for government and of particular concern to parents and older people.
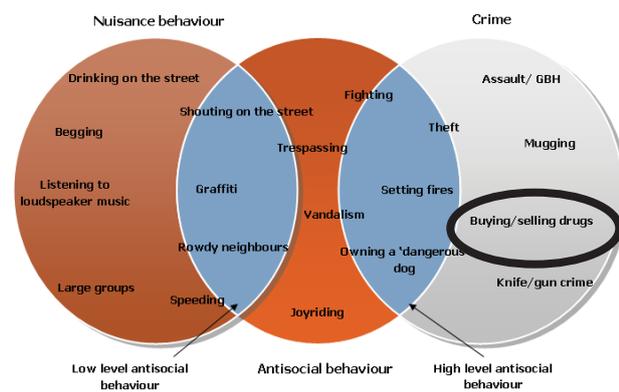
The image below provides a summary of how young people felt that government, parents, elderly neighbour and young people themselves viewed buying/ selling drugs.

Young people
"Way to get money fast. Think their 'big in the game'. Well brought up kids thinks it's bad." (London 16-17)

"They may be involved with it. If they get involved it could affect them when they get older." (Newcastle18-19)

"Good if you do it. Bad if you don't. Not a bad effect depending on the person." (Manchester 16-17)

Government
"They want it eradicated completely The police know about and may have an idea." (London 16-17)

"Happens too much. Makes it unsafe for the rest of the public. Raising classes of drugs making it worse if you get caught." (Manchester 16-17)

"They will try to stop it." (Newcastle 18-19)

Buying/Selling drugs

Parents
"Worried they could get into serious trouble with people higher up in the game. Gives the area a bad name." (London 16-17)

"They could be doing it or they will protect their kids from where it happens or who is causing it. They will want police patrol to keep an eye out for it." (Newcastle 18-19)

"Too easy to get hold of. More people doing it. More people should get searched." (Manchester 16-17)

Elderly neighbours
"Worried about it being sold in their local area or on their door step." (London 16-17)

"Will feel threatened by it and they will want it stopped." (Newcastle 18-19)

"Bad for the community. Makes it unsafe for them feel threatened. Need to make parents more aware." (Manchester 16-17)

Drinking on the street

**Although drinking on the street was
not described as ASB in itself, it was
seen by the majority of young people
as a potential pre-cursor to ASB**.
Young people also considered the
problem of drinking alcohol in other areas
such as parks and fields, where they
often gathered. Overall, drinking on the
street was reported as an activity that

happened in all research locations. **Participants noticed broken bottles and empty cans
of alcohol in their local which indicated that people had been drinking on the street.
Some participants felt that this type of littering indicated that an area was not safe
after dark, as most street drinking happened at night.**
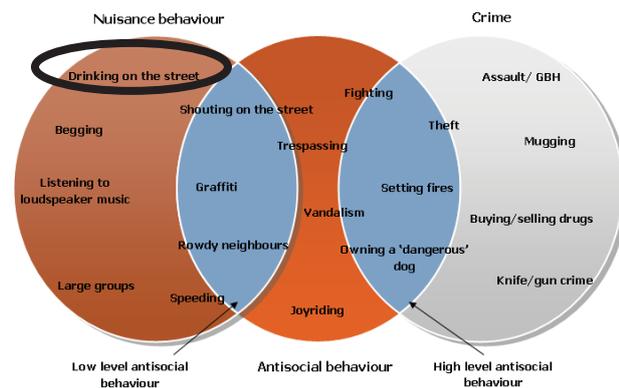
> *"Coming back from college, I walked down a path to get to my house and it was
> covered in litter mostly beer bottles and cans. It makes the place look like a rubbish tip"*
> *(Manchester 16-17)*

**Drinking on the street was seen to have a causal relationship to other types of ASB.
Many participants reported becoming involved in shouting, fighting and vandalism as
a result of alcohol use/ misuse**. Alcohol use/ misuse is discussed in more detail in the
next section of the report.

The image below provides a summary of how young people felt that government, parents, elderly neighbours and young people themselves viewed street drinking.


Young people
"[Young teenagers] might want to try it because older kids are doing it." (Birmingham 14-16)

"[It could] lead to more vandalism." (Leeds 14-16)

"It's breaking the law but it's not doing any harm." (Manchester 16-17)

Government
"They try and get people to stop by putting laws in action." (Birmingham 14-16)

"It's anti-social behaviour and shouldn't be done at a young age." (Manchester 16-17)

"Obviously they think it's bad because they want the amount of crime to go down." (Leeds 14-16)

Street Drinking

Parents
"Depends how strictly our parents are. Generally I think they will say to stay away." (Leeds 14-16)

"Don't like their kids drinking on the street and coming home drunk. More police on the street. Something should be done." (Manchester 16-17)

"Depending on type of parents, most would disapprove." (Newcastle 18-19)

Elderly neighbours
"They hate it because they may think that the drinkers are terrorising the area." (Manchester 16-17)

"They would say 'It's horrible and scary. It wouldn't have happened when I was younger.'" (Manchester 16-17)

"The media scares them." (Newcastle 18-19)

Vandalism

Some participants had been involved in vandalism, but relatively few. **Where they had been involved, this was usually as a result of alcohol use/ misuse. Male participants were more likely to be involved in vandalism than females, and more often described this activity as fun or exciting when they were feeling bored.**
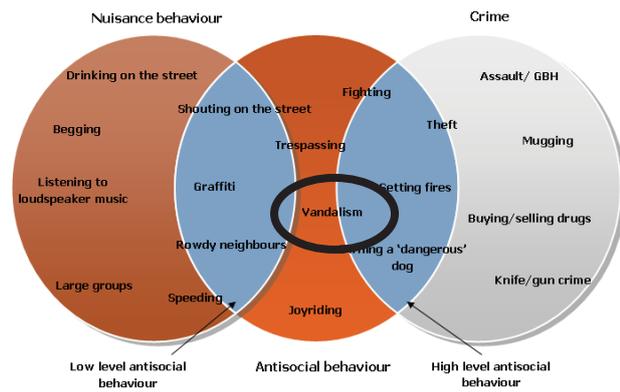
There was a general awareness that vandalism had a visible effect on the local community, and was something that other people in society were likely to feel strongly about and want to tackle. **Young people themselves felt that vandalism made their neighbourhood appear unsafe and an unpleasant place to live.** Participants had seen a number of broken windows, vandalised public toilets and telephone boxes, and damaged public transport vehicles (see participant photographs on the left).

The image below provides a summary of how young people felt that government, parents, elderly neighbours and young people themselves viewed vandalism.
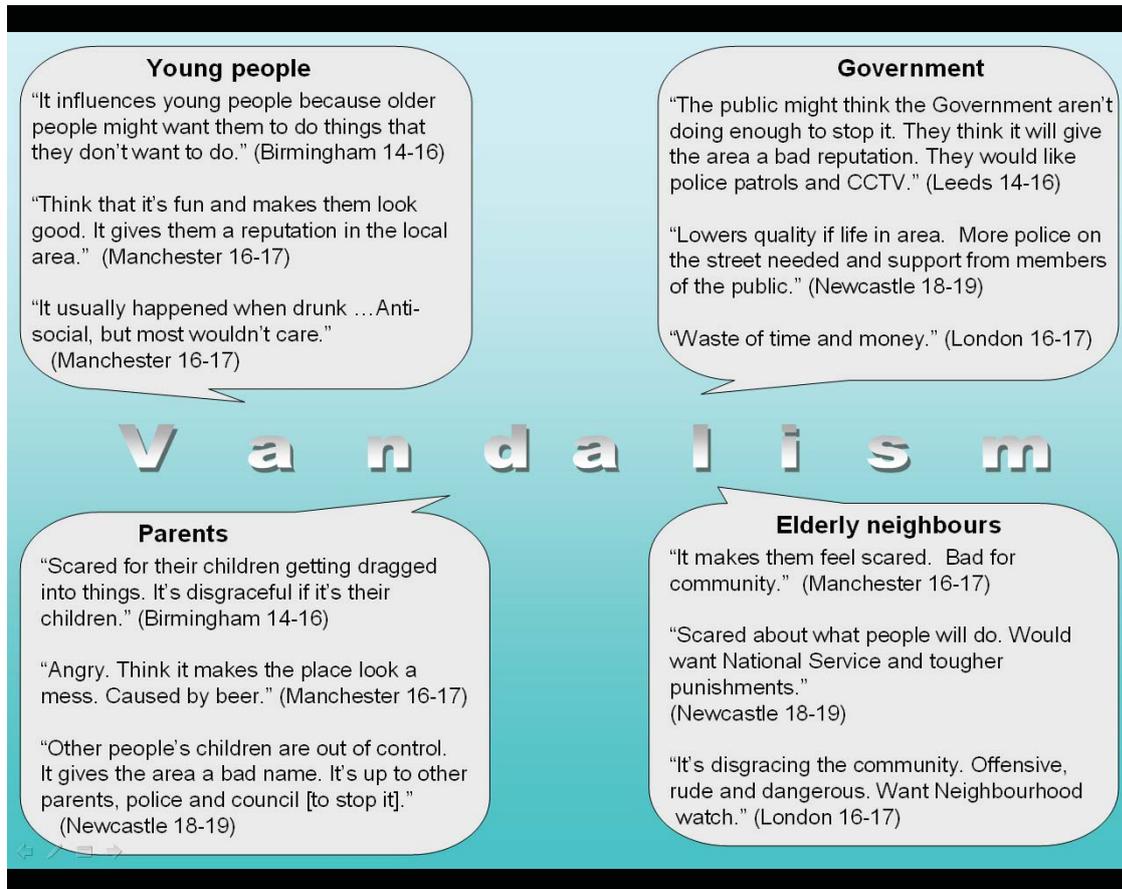
Rowdy neighbours

Although rowdy neighbours were seen as problematic, **very few participants had experienced rowdy neighbours personally in their local area.** It was suggested by some participants that people were within their rights to do as they wished in their own homes, as long as they were not directly causing a problem to other people. **Although participants observed that some young people could be part of a family of rowdy neighbours, it was generally seen as something that adults would be at the centre of and would typically only involve young people who were not controlled by their parents.**
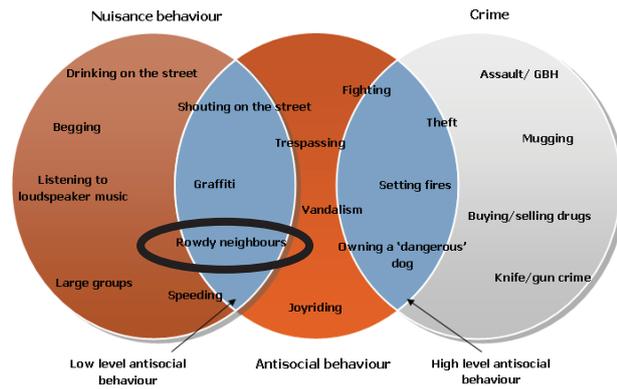
Overall participants struggled to describe how different groups in society would feel about having rowdy neighbours, as this was something that they had not personally experienced.

The image below provides a summary of how young people felt that government, parents, elderly neighbours and young people themselves viewed rowdy neighbours.
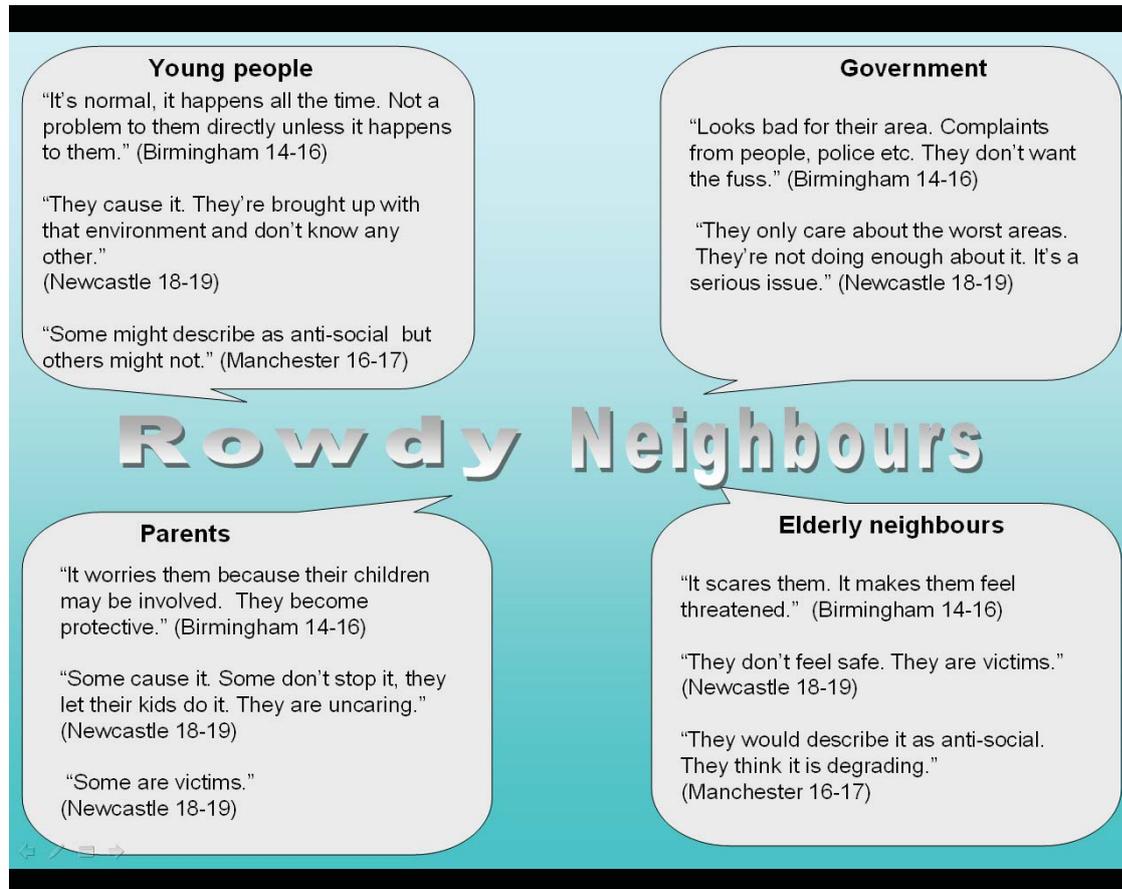
Experiences and perceptions of alcohol use/ misuse

A proportion of the clinics were spent discussing alcohol with participants to explore young peoples' experiences of alcohol and understand whether young people linked alcohol use/ misuse to anti-social behaviour. This section of the report looks at:

- Experiences and drivers of alcohol use/ misuse;

- Perceptions of alcohol use/ misuse and consequences;

- Alcohol and anti-social behaviour.

Most of the young people in the research noted that they had drunk alcohol themselves although they did not drink on a frequent basis. A couple of participants in each clinic did not drink alcohol; this was usually because they had had negative experiences of drinking alcohol, had seen family or friends experience the negative effects of alcohol use, or had religious views on drinking alcohol.

For young people, drinking alcohol was considered a normal activity that most young people took part in.

> *"It's just something you do. Everyone does it" (Birmingham, 14-16)*

In this regard it was seen as a 'rite of passage' and an experience related to growing up and being a teenager.

A key driver to alcohol use/ misuse was the perceived association with enjoyment. Across the qualitative research **participants associated drinking alcohol with socializing and having fun.**

> *"To have a good time and make it more interesting" (Leeds 14-16)*

Participants aged over 18 years old mentioned events such as parties or nights out with friends at pubs or clubs as occasions when they would drink alcohol. A small number of those aged under 18 years old also noted that they drank alcohol at parties or in pubs and clubs. However, **most drank with friends on the street or in parks in their local area. Female participants aged less than 18 years old were more likely to mention going to pubs and clubs**. They noted that they were not asked for ID at these establishments and purposely dressed to look older and appear 18 years old to secure their entry. **Male participants commented that it was more difficult for them to gain entry into pubs and clubs and resultantly they were more likely to drink alcohol on the street.**

> *"When you're at our age – sixteen, seventeen – you're not old enough to drink legally in a pub but you want to drink so you have to drink on the streets" (Manchester 16-17)*

A number of participants aged less than 18 years old mentioned that they occasionally drank alcohol at their home or a friend's home under parental supervision. They suggested that drinking at home with adult supervision was better for them as the amount of alcohol they were allowed was limited and their actions were more controlled.

A further **driver to alcohol use cited among younger participants was boredom.** Participants aged less than 18 years old commented that they sometimes drank alcohol because they felt "bored". They felt that there was nothing else in their local area to do.

> *"Sometimes you drink just to drink" (Birmingham, 14-16)*

> *"It's so boring, you ain't got nothing to do so you think, oh, let's go and buy alcohol, let's go and buy like puff or whatever." (London, 16-17)*

Drinking as a result of boredom was often done in large groups of friends in local areas. Some participants noted that whilst in a large group they had experienced peer pressure to drink alcohol.

> *"Sometimes you get sort of pressured into it [drinking], if you go out to a party with friends you might even not want to drink but if you see everyone else drinking it's like you have to drink cos otherwise you're just standing there and you're bored" (London, 16-17)*

There was much discussion regarding access to alcohol among the participants. **Those aged under 18 years old noted that they typically bought alcohol from local corner shops, or asked people to buy alcohol for them**. This often involved waiting outside local corner shops and asking people who walked past to buy alcohol for them. Participants aged over 18 years old recollected that this is how they had accessed alcohol when they were younger.

> *"Just ask someone like 18, they'll just think it's funny and do it [buy you alcohol]"* *(Birmingham, 14-16)*

> *"You can generally ask a stranger and they will go in and buy it for you" (Leeds, 14-16)*

Those aged under 18 years old who bought alcohol themselves knew the types of shops where they were least likely to be asked for ID. They typically avoided national supermarket chains as they were perceived to have strict enforcement of alcohol age limits. Local corner shops were considered easier to purchase alcohol from. Across the clinics, access to alcohol was perceived to be a key enabler to alcohol consumption.

> *"I just think that's why people do it, because they know they can get it. If they thought they couldn't they probably wouldn't" (Birmingham, 14-16)*

> *"It's bad really because if they hadn't have gotten it [alcohol] for us then we wouldn't have been drinking at such a young age" (London, 16-17)*

Whilst in general most participants aged under 18 years old felt that it was fairly easy to access alcohol, **female participants indicated that they found it easier than their male counterparts to approach strangers to buy alcohol on their behalf, or purchase themselves in local shops.** Again, they purposely dressed to look 18 years old to help them access alcohol.

Perceptions of alcohol use and consequences

During the clinics and online stage of the research, participants were asked to consider different types of alcohol use/misuse and the associated consequences. When thinking about the consequences of drinking alcohol young people tended to think about the impact on the individual rather than the impact on their local area. Whilst young people did observe that alcohol use/misuse could lead to anti-social activities, they often thought of the personal impact that these types of activity would have on the individual (for example, getting arrested), rather than the impact that these activities had on a local area. The link between alcohol use/misuse and anti-social behaviour is discussed later within this section.

When thinking about their own alcohol use/misuse, **young people felt that any related consequences were low severity and short term. Alcohol use/ misuse was mostly associated with positive emotions**, especially increased confidence, although participants were quick to note that the consequence of increased confidence could be negative. **The negative outcomes of increased confidence experienced by young people included becoming aggressive and getting involved in fights with friends or strangers, and becoming attracted to those that they would not find attractive when sober**. Some participants mentioned vandalism such as smashing or throwing things, and in extreme instances getting arrested by the police for aggressive behaviour.

> *"You get a lot more confident so you just do things you wouldn't really normally do, you approach people you wouldn't normally probably approach. You have arguments with people you wouldn't normally have arguments with; you feel attracted to people you wouldn't normally feel attracted to. Then in the morning you wake up and think 'oh my god, what did I do last night?!' And then you go out and do it [again] the next day." (London, 16-17)*

> *"You do silly things if you drink too much – things you wouldn't normally do." (Leeds, 14-16)*

Other participants mentioned feeling the physical effects of alcohol such as passing out, falling over, memory loss, being sick or having a hangover.

> *"When you wake up in the morning you have so many bruises, then it hurts" (London, 16-17)*

> *"It's just the next day, the hangover" (Birmingham, 14-16)*

The most serious possible consequences of alcohol consumption generated across the research were committing a crime and being arrested by the police, and having a drink spiked with a date rape drug. However, these were viewed as unlikely to happen and therefore did not overly concern the young people in the research.

Overall, the consequences of participants' alcohol use/misuse were considered short term and usually easily resolved. Whilst young people sometimes regretted their behaviour when they had drunk alcohol, they did not feel that their alcohol use/misuse would have a long term impact or serious effect on them. Resultantly young people did not feel that any intervention was required for their alcohol use/misuse. A small number of participants noted that their parents had 'grounded' them for their drinking behaviour, but this was not deemed a long-term deterrent.

During the research, participants were asked to think about the alcohol use/misuse and related consequences of those who 'drank too much' and 'drank too often'. Young people saw a close connection between these two, with the consequences often similar, but it was noted that one behaviour did not necessarily result in the other (you can drink too much without drinking too often and vice versa).

Although most young people said they themselves had drunk too often or too much at some point, **they tended to distance themselves from the negative aspects of these behaviours.** Whilst drinking excessively and/or frequently was deemed to be harmful behaviour when done for a long period of time, young people did not feel that it was problematic if they did it occasionally. **For participants, occasional excessive drinking was considered part of the experience of growing up.**

> *"We're allowed to make mistakes…older people, it affects them more…we've got the rest of our lives" (London, 16-17)*

When young people drank too often or too much it was usually at the height of boredom, such as school holidays when there was less to do or as a result of peer pressure.

Long-term excessive and/or frequent alcohol use/misuse was associated with older people and was seen as problematic and symptomatic of personal emotional issues.

Participants were given a range of images to prompt them to think about different types of alcohol use/misuse. They most frequently selected images of older people or those who appeared to be depressed as examples of excessive/frequent drinkers. Participants felt that people who had drank alcohol excessively and/or frequently on a long-term basis were likely to experience both emotional and physical long term consequences. Drinking frequently and/or excessively was associated with emotional problems such as depression, problems with relationships and was seen as a form of escapism from the realities of life. Consequences of this type of alcohol use/misuse were perceived to be long term, and fell into three broad groups: emotional, behavioural and physical.

> *"Moody and ratty all the time…lost their friends…bad for their health." (Birmingham 14-16)*

Emotional consequences:

These included depression and severe break-down of personal relationships resulting from alcohol induced arguments with friends and family. With regards to depression, young people felt that serious cases could lead to self-harm and suicidal thoughts. Further to this, young people felt that drinking excessively and/or frequently would negatively impact on finances, maintaining employment, and could affect children in the household. **Whilst some young people indicated that they knew of people who had experienced these types of consequences of alcohol use/misuse, none noted that these consequences had been experienced by themselves or their peers.**

Behavioural consequences:

Young people felt that drinking excessively and/ or frequently could lead to irrational behaviour which would result in the individual often becoming aggressive, or **repeatedly getting involved in criminal behaviour (such as fights and vandalism) which could lead to police involvement.**

Physical consequences:

The most frequently mentioned physical consequence of drinking excessively and/ or frequently was liver damage. Participants also suggested that this type of alcohol use/ misuse could lead to other illnesses including cancer, and could result in hospitalisation. Serious health problems resulting from drinking alcohol were often associated with an alcohol addiction.

Whilst young people were able to identify the more serious consequences of drinking alcohol, most had not experienced these. It was agreed that individuals who experienced these consequences would need physical and emotional support to tackle their drinking behaviour. Young people struggled to suggest places where this type of support could be accessed as they did not see themselves as requiring such support. Some mentioned counselling services, and there was one mention of FRANK.

Alcohol and crime/anti-social behaviour

Alcohol use/misuse in itself was not always considered to be criminal or anti-social, although as previously mentioned, young people felt that alcohol use/ misuse could lead to criminal or anti-social behaviour.

> *"Alcohol could make you…go do something which is criminal so it all kind of ties in together" (London, 16-17)*

> *"People who drink too much, they're just gonna cause problems" (Birmingham, 14-16)*

Some participants aged over 18 years old suggested that under-age drinking was criminal and anti-social because it was against the law, and, because it usually took place on the street. However, most participants, including those aged under 18 years old did not think that under-aged drinking was criminal or anti-social behaviour in itself unless it led to a specific criminal or anti-social activity, such as fighting. This included when drinking alcohol on the street.

> *"I suppose its anti-social behaviour if you're wandering around the streets, sitting in the park getting drunk, but I suppose if you go to your mates for a casual drink, then I suppose if you keep it to a certain limit and don't go out, get bladdered, and cause trouble, I suppose it's not really classed as anti-social behaviour" (London, 16-17)*

Most young people had direct experience of the causal relationship between alcohol and anti-social behaviour and had seen it happen in their local area. Some noted that their local pub was a location where they had seen or expected anti-social behaviour to occur. **The photographs of pubs were taken by young people as part of their pre-task and were cited as locations that have a reputation for anti-social behaviour.**

Young people noted that alcohol use/ misuse could lead to the following types of criminal and anti-social activities:

- Aggressive behaviour: fighting

  "If you drink too much you might get out of hand and violent and stuff." (Leeds, 14-16)

  "Some people turn angry when they've had a drink don't they…start like shouting in the streets." (Newcastle, 18-19)

- Vandalism

  "When you're causing trouble and getting aggressive to people and vandalising things and knocking things over and kicking things and smashing things." (London, 16-17)

YCAP initiatives

Across the research, participants were asked about their knowledge and awareness of nine YCAP initiatives, which were explained using language and concepts that the young people would understand. The initiatives discussed were as follows:-

- Positive activities

- Street-based teams

- After school patrols

- Operation Staysafe (discussed in the context of general police presence)

- Confiscation of alcohol

- Working with local businesses (to reduce sales of alcohol to under 18s)

- Triage (Youth Offending Team workers in custody suites)

- Reparation in leisure time

- Family Intervention Projects

There were varying levels of knowledge and awareness across the initiatives, with participants across age groups and locations more likely to report knowledge of an initiative where they had come into direct contact with it themselves or knew somebody who had. Levels of detailed knowledge regarding initiatives were low.

Where the initiative had not been experienced, participants theoretically discussed the potential effects of the initiative.   The initiatives were analysed according to the 'triple track' approach, with initiatives falling into the categories of 'enforcement', 'prevention' or 'support' and views of these are summarised below.

Enforcement	
• Confiscation of alcohol • Reparation in leisure time • General increased police presence	Participants were most familiar with initiatives classed as enforcement and had either direct contact with these or had seen them in action in their local area. These initiatives usually involved some form of police activity. *"They pour [the alcohol] away and they give you a warning. My friend had a warning and she was on her last warning so if she ever got caught again she would be arrested."* *(London 16-17)* There was widespread awareness of more police presence across locations and some participants, particularly those in the 18-19 age group, were glad that a something was being done to tackle youth crime and ASB. Although the police were recognised as an authority by all, there was an overwhelming view that young people had limited respect for them and did not think they were always effective. Despite this, the police were often the only agents seen as having the authority to tackle youth crime and ASB. *"I don't trust the police. I don't see why I should trust the police." (Manchester 16-17)* *"I think [the police] are the only one's that have the authority." (Newcastle 18-19)*

	Suggested enforcement initiatives generated by participants were CCTV cameras, zero tolerance police policy (when tackling gun and knife crime) and fining young people – increasing fines each time they are caught.

Prevention	
• Operation Staysafe • Reparation in leisure time • After school patrols • Positive activities • Working with local businesses • Street-based youth teams	Prevention initiatives were closely linked with a community approach to stopping youth crime and ASB before it started. *"You don't need someone attacking you. You need someone to talk to who's not going to say anything and who's dealing with that all the time and can offer you help, not like a policeman." (Manchester 16-17)* Participants saw these initiatives as effective deterrents to youth crime and ASB and in many instances they felt safer in their local area with preventative measures in place. However, the majority agreed that young people would find ways around these initiatives or avoid contact with them. *"I think it's the nature of kids. They'll do it no matter what. They'll find a way around. So it's hard to think of things to do."* *(Newcastle 18-19)* Suggested prevention initiatives generated by participants were gates on alleyways, showing the effects of drugs in schools/bringing alcoholics in to schools to do talks and naming and shaming offenders.

Support	
• Family Intervention Projects • Street based youth teams • Triage	Supportive initiatives were thought to be among the most effective of the measures as they tackled youth crime and ASB 'at the source'. *"They look at why the young person is doing it. If they came from a family where they were abused or something like that they might give them counselling instead of punishing them."* *(Newcastle 18-19)* Awareness of these initiatives was fairly limited across locations and age groups and none of the participants reported direct experience of these. Support was not generally recognised as being necessary to tackle low level ASB or nuisance behaviours. Rather, it was seen as being needed by individuals or families who were involved in higher level and more frequent ASB, or who were involved in criminal activity.

Effectiveness of YCAP initiatives

Perceived effectiveness of a range of YCAP initiatives is discussed below:

Positive activities

Most participants felt that they were aware of facilities and activities for young people in their local area. **Participants aged under 18 years across the locations reported that there were more activities available to them in the daytime and early evening on weekends, but nothing later at night,** particularly after 9pm on weekends. All participants agreed that under 18s were unlikely to go home early on a weekend. **Although young people appreciated having facilities and activities, the early closure of venues meant they still hung around outside late at night.** Further to this there were some mentions of troublemakers attending youth clubs, meaning other young people ended up avoiding them.

> *"Kids aren't gonna go home at 9 o'clock on a Friday and Saturday night. They'll just go back out onto the streets." (Newcastle 18-19)*

Participants across the age groups, but particularly younger **participants wanted a wider range of facilities available to them**, such as organised sports events and graffiti walls. They also wanted facilities to stay open later. The range of facilities available was also often limited and young people had little say in what was provided for them. **Young people disliked controlled environments with adult supervision**, such as a certain youth clubs, and noted that they would prefer facilities with less stringent supervision.

> *"Most teenagers want their own freedom so I suppose they just want to go somewhere where people aren't watching them constantly. It could still be enclosed." (Birmingham 14-16)*

> *"Like a nightclub but for people younger … They don't sell alcohol there because they know you're underage but you still feel safe and you're not drinking." (Birmingham 14-16)*

Young people noted that, unlike adults, they themselves did not have enough money to use paid for facilities that tended to stay open later such as restaurants, cinemas and entertainment complexes. It was suggested that vouchers could be provided to allow young people to use these types of facilities at reduced rates.

Street based teams

There was limited awareness of this initiative across locations and age groups and no participants reported being approached by teams of police/youth workers. **The majority of participants were amenable to being approached and being told about activities, and most said that they would participate in activities or attend facilities if they were told about them.** However, participants felt that they knew what was available in their area already, and chose not to use facilities for other reasons, such as finding the activities boring or wanting to do their own thing.

> *"Some people may go but loads of people will probably prefer to spend their Friday and Saturday night doing what they want to do." (Leeds 14-15)*

> *"If they're doing football or something like that, more [young people] will turn up to play." (Newcastle 18-19)*

Although this initiative was deemed to be a good idea in principle, some participants commented that they would only respond to this type of initiative if they had respect for the individuals and agencies approaching them. The common view was that this initiative would not work so well if the police or PCSOs were too closely involved as young people had limited respect for them.

> *"Not police, because they seem to just accuse you." (Birmingham 14-16)*

The majority of participants still at school had seen police and PCSOs patrolling outside their schools. Older participants were also aware of after school patrols, and some reported that these patrols had been in place when they were at school. Some participants noted that teachers would inform the police about incidents that happened during the school day, and would let the police know if they heard about any pupils intending to fight after school.

> *"If teachers heard stuff was gonna happen after school, the police were all there after school but it didn't really stop anything." (Newcastle 18-19)*

These patrols generally reassured and made young people feel safer, and in some instances it had reduced the number of fights outside schools, but this very much depended on who carried out the patrols. **Very few participants recognised that PCSOs in particular were there to engage with young people**. Instead they were described as being powerless.

> *"The police aren't intimidating you; they're not asking you anything they're just watching people walk home." (Birmingham 14-16)*

> *"[The police officer] cuts down fights if she sees them." (Leeds 14-16)*

> *"[PCSOs] can't even touch you … They can't even hold you. They just say 'stay there until the police arrive."(London 16-17)*

Even when police were on patrol, some still felt that they did not actually prevent anything from happening. Instead, participants agreed that they would move to other locations if they wished to engage in an activity such as fighting or under-age smoking or drinking. Therefore, the idea of patrols was deemed to be good in principle, but ineffective in practice.

> *"We used to have the police after school to see if anything was going to happen but it didn't really stop it. We just went around the corner." (Newcastle 18-19)*

There was a high level of awareness of police patrols across locations. Participants reported encountering police regularly when they were out and had been split up by the police if they were in a large group. Patrolling police made young people feel safer if they were alone or in small groups. It was recognised that, under some circumstances, it was necessary for police to be highly visible and regularly approach groups. This was mentioned particularly in London in relation to gun and knife crime.

However, the large **majority of participants agreed that it was easy to avoid police patrols by moving to alternative locations not covered by these patrols.** A couple of participants further commented that police would avoid going to particular areas, as they did not want to confront large groups or did not think groups would congregate in those areas.

> *"There used to be three main places at night. Everyone used to go to one and if the police came they'd go to another one and then if they came they'd just go to another one and then back to the first one." (Newcastle 18-19)*

> *"They don't tend to think of places that are obvious. Like fields and stuff. They think you won't go there because it's in the open where cars go past. So they'll start patrolling where the parks are and stuff." (Newcastle 18-19)*

Some participants in Newcastle had seen CCTV cameras monitored by the police in areas where young people regularly congregated. Across the research, participants commented that alleyways frequented by large groups had been gated, with police patrolling the gates to make sure they were not vandalised by young people trying to enter the alleyways. These measures were thought to be effective deterrents.

> *"There was a part of my estate where loads of kids used to go. They put these cameras up that followed movement and they never went there again." (Newcastle 18-19)*

> *"There was a bottom gate and a top gate and they would always be standing there in case anything did happen." (Newcastle 18-19)*

The general consensus was that the police patrols were easy to avoid and, even when young people were approached by the police, they were simply split up and moved on. Participants reported that they could easily reconvene in another location once the police

had left the area. **It was suggested that taking young people home would be more effective as it would enable parents to take some responsibility for the actions of their children.**

> *"It doesn't work. As soon as they're gone you just go back into a group."*
> *(Birmingham 14-16)*

> *"If [young people] are not vandalising places or not intimidating anyone then I don't think it's a problem [to be in a large group]." (Leeds 14-16)*

Confiscation of alcohol

The large majority of young people across the locations had personally experienced this initiative. A number of participants had had their alcohol poured away in front of them after being stopped by the police. This was generally seen as an effective deterrent as young people commonly said that they would go home if they had alcohol taken away from them. **However, it was also suggested that this initiative would drive people to drink more secretively, as they would try harder not to get caught.**

> *"It just makes you more secretive [about where you drink]." (Manchester 16-17)*

> *"They tip it out right in front of you." (Manchester 16-17)*

Male participants reported that they were likely to go home if they had alcohol confiscated. Whilst most female participants noted that they would also go home, the research indicated that females typically found it easier to access alcohol and resultantly continue drinking even if alcohol had been confiscated.

> *"If they still have more money on them they'll just go and buy more drinks." (London 16-17)*

It was suggested that **this initiative could be made more effective by fining the parents of young people caught with alcohol in order to force them to address this issue with their children. It was also suggested that young people could be fined themselves, with an increasing fine each time they were caught with alcohol.**

Participants of all age groups across the locations were aware of initiatives to stop young people buying alcohol. Many had personally encountered this initiative particularly when in supermarkets with parents or older siblings. In a few cases, the older person they were with had been stopped from buying alcohol because the young person did not have any ID. When discussing this initiative, participants most frequently mentioned supermarkets as enforcing the rule of only selling alcohol to those who looked over 21 or 25 years old.

> *"If you are underage you can't buy alcohol. You have to look 21 to actually buy it." (Leeds 14-16)*

> *"They do that thing now in like Asda. If you look under 25 they ask for your ID automatically." (London 16-17)*

Despite this being an effective initiative in supermarkets, **participants overwhelmingly agreed that young people easily found ways to get alcohol. This included going to local shops that were typically far more willing to sell them alcohol**. Another way of accessing alcohol was by asking strangers to purchase it on their behalf.

> *"Some shopkeepers come out and they give [alcohol] to you around the corner or they put it under the table. Or they wait until people are out of the shop." (London 16-17)*

> *"Girls get served more than boys anyway, if you're going out for a night out and you've got a tiny little top and a pair of skinny jeans on or something they just perv over you so they give it to you." (London 16-17)*

Triage/Youth Offending Team Workers in Custody Suites

Similarly, participants had very limited awareness of this initiative across the locations and age groups. No participants had encountered this initiative first hand or knew anybody who had. **There were mixed views regarding this initiative. Most young people felt that it was a good idea as it offered young people a second chance and an opportunity to change their ways. A small minority felt that if someone was caught for being involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour, they should be punished.**

> *"I think that would be good because when you've done something wrong or when you've got a problem, you don't need someone attacking you." (Manchester 16-17)*

> *"I just don't think its right to find an alternative for someone being charged with a crime they've committed. If they've committed the crime they can do the time." (Newcastle 18-19)*

There was high awareness of this initiative and a number of participants across locations and age groups had seen community service taking place in their local area or knew somebody who had been given community service. **Reparation was seen as an effective deterrent for young people; participants noted that they would personally find it embarrassing.**

> _"[My friends] did it and obviously they didn't enjoy it so then they calmed down a bit after so they knew that they didn't have to do it again." (Birmingham 14-16)_

> _"If you make them embarrassed by putting them in something that stand out … like an orange jump suit they're most probably going to think to themselves' 'I'm not going to do that.'" (London 16-17)_

It was suggested that the community service given to young people should directly relate to the activity they had been involved in, as this would make them see the direct repercussion of their actions. Some also felt that the type of community service given should increase in severity for repeat offenders, especially if previous community service had not changed their behaviour.

> _"They do graffiti and then as their punishment they have to wash it off, and then they do it again and they don't get any better." (Manchester 16-17)_

Participants in Newcastle suggested mirroring a scheme used by the metro, which named and shamed fare dodgers. It was suggested that this would also be an effective deterrent as it also incorporated a degree of embarrassment.

> _"I think if they graffitied on something and they were made to take the time to clean it off they would understand 'since I'm doing this, someone else has to clean it up."_
> _(Newcastle 18-19)_

Family Intervention Projects

Awareness of this initiative was very low amongst all participants but there was widespread agreement that this would be an effective initiative in tackling ASB at the source. **There was a common view that young people from particular types of families, where there was a lack of moral structure, were responsible for youth crime and ASB.**

> *"If you live in an area with loads of vandalism and you let your children go and play out they're going to start to think 'well it happens around here so it must be ok."* *(Newcastle 18-19)*

> *"If they're young they might be influenced by their family and I think in some cases counselling might be better than punishing them." (Newcastle 18-19)*

The general view was that this initiative was not relevant to the majority of young people or to those involved in nuisance behaviours/low level ASB.

Awareness of other local initiatives

Participants were asked to detail any further initiatives in place to tackle youth crime, ASB or youth drinking in their local area. Across the locations there was limited and spontaneous awareness of initiatives. When asked about local activities, participants spontaneously mentioned the following:-

- **Youth clubs** – the majority of participants had youth clubs in their local area. Although there was generally a positive response to having youth clubs, they were commonly said to be boring, with limited facilities. Resultantly few young people attended these.

- **Activity buses** – mentioned in Birmingham, participants spoke about a bus with activities such as games consoles on-board. The bus drove around the local area and young people could board and play games. Participants were in favour of having this facility but few actually used it and some queried whether it still existed.

- **Challenge 21** – many young people were aware of this campaign to stop people buying alcohol. Most had come across this initiative in large supermarket chains, where they were more likely to be asked for ID. Participants generally felt that this was an effective initiative where it was implemented properly.

- **Patrol buses** – some participants in Newcastle mentioned a patrol bus that travelled around the local area picking up young people that had been drinking and returning them home.   Some felt that this was a positive initiative as young people were able to get home safely but more sceptical participants thought that young people would drink more knowing that they were able to get a lift home.

- **Neighbourhood watch** – participants in Manchester and Newcastle were aware of community wardens and neighbourhood watch committees in their local area. Most did not take these initiatives seriously as they saw these groups as having limited or no power to stop youth crime or ASB

- **Dispersal** – participants across locations mentioned police dispersing large groups. Some were aware of dispersal orders which prevented young people from congregating in groups larger than two in number. Most found this an annoyance, but some felt that it was potentially dangerous, as young people felt unsafe in alone or in pairs.

- **Clubs for under 18s** – some participants had been to club nights for young people and there was an overall consensus that this was a good idea and should be done more often. Some suggested that the club nights provided a controlled environment while still allowing young people to enjoy themselves.

Despite having some initiatives in place, **the general view was that levels of youth crime and ASB had not changed in the local areas of the participants.** It was suggested that many of the initiatives in place offered short term solutions as young people were likely to repeat their actions. Across the research, **the overwhelming view was that youth crime and ASB could easily be reduced by offering young people more things to do and a wider range of facilities.**

Representations in the Media

Further findings from the online board

The Media

Participants were asked to discuss the media representation of young people to see if young people are being accurately represented. The online tasks included evaluating television programmes that represented young people as well as sharing websites, online videos and images.

Looking at the media representation of young people on the television, most of the participants felt that they provided a stereotypical view of teenagers. Most of the television programmes discussed were watched by the participants on a regular basis. These programmes were: Skins, Misfits, The Inbetweeners, Waterloo Road, Shameless, X Factor and Hollyoaks. Skins was chosen by the most number of participants as a programme that represented teenagers in a way that they could relate to (having fun, going to parties, dealing with similar teenage issues) however the programme was also thought to over glamorise the teenage years by suggesting young people drink a lot of alcohol and take drugs.

When viewing the Internet, the participants shared a number of images and links that they felt represented young people and ASB more accurately than the mainstream media. A mix of positive and negative stories and images were shared, some celebrating the achievements of young people with links to the Children and Young People Now Awards 2009 and UNICEF; while others reinforced the negative image of young people as perpetrators of antisocial behaviour with links to newspaper stories about ASBOs and teenage knife crime.

Overall the participants shared twice as many negative weblinks and videos as they did positive. This could have been due to the fact that it is more difficult to find positive representations of young people. However, the reality of living in the UK as a young person was presented as a difficult time; with stories of teenage depression and the need for adults (parents and teachers) to have greater understanding of the issues young people face.

To the right there is a selection of images shared by participants to highlight both positive and negative examples of experiences of young people.

Advertising

Participants were asked to share what they thought about the Home Office 'You wouldn't start a night like this…' advertising campaign aimed at young people who drink alcohol[7]. The intended message of the advertising is to make young people aware of the affects of alcohol and that it can result in unintended actions.

Having viewed the television advert online, young people did not agree with the way the advertising was communicating to young people. Most of the participants felt that the advertising portrayed young people as irresponsible, careless and unable to look after themselves. A small number of the participants recognised that the advert was trying to suggest moderation when drinking, however most of the teenagers felt that the advert portrayed an image of untrustworthy young people who drink to the extreme.

This advert, along with other media representations of young people, left the participants discussing their familiarity with the exaggerated negative stereotype of young people. Although participants recognised that the stories told in advertising and by the media are not inaccurate, they felt that they did not differ from adults in their approach to alcohol and were therefore being penalised for their age rather than their actions.

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[7] Participants were shown the male and female 'you wouldn't start a night like this…' adverts.
http://wouldyou.direct.gov.uk/Stories.php

Policy Implications of Findings

Anti social behaviour is viewed, at least in part, as a 'youth problem'. Teenagers hanging around were seen as the second biggest problem of the seven measures of anti-social behaviour, with over half of respondents saying that it was a very or fairly big problem. The young people spoken to in this research had some awareness of how their presence in large groups could be seen as intimidating, with some commenting on how they sought to hang around in more remote or less obvious areas where they would not cause concern or be 'found' and moved on. Young people were sometimes intimidated themselves when alone and in the presence of groups that they were not a part of and although they criticised media representations of their generation, it was clear from the research that they were themselves influenced by negative portrayals of young people. A number of young people stated that hanging around in groups made them feel safer.

Young people's desire to socialise without adult supervision means they view hanging around in groups simply as part of being a young person. Young people were clear that there were few alternatives available to them as they had limited funds and a desire not to be supervised. Young people accepted that there were some facilities open to them in their area, but were often critical that the level of adult supervision, the activities on offer and the days and times that they were open did not meet their needs. The young people's clear message was that the right activities and facilities would help to reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour.

In this survey and the British Crime Survey, when interviewees who viewed teenagers hanging around as a problem were asked about specific behaviours that they had witnessed, young people drinking alcohol was amongst the top responses. Similarly, of those who felt that people being drunk and rowdy was a problem, almost two thirds attributed that to young/underage people drinking in the street. It is clear from this research that young/underage people drinking alcohol on the streets is of particular concern to the public.

The link between drinking alcohol and anti-social and criminal behaviour was highlighted by the young people themselves, but to state that there is a link between alcohol use and crime and ASB does not in itself prove causality. It could be the case that young people's drinking habits are part of an 'underlying risky lifestyle'[8] Although young people themselves accepted that alcohol consumption could lead to criminal or anti-social behaviour, they saw drinking alcohol as a normal part of growing up, with long term consequences generally limited to adults who consume excessive amounts of alcohol.

The evidence is clear that youth crime and ASB are a concern to residents in YCAP areas. This highlights that YCAP is targeting the right areas, but also that these problems are very real to residents. Specifically, this report shows that each of the seven measures of ASB is rated as more of a problem than in the BCS. Awareness of initiatives to reduce youth crime and anti-social behaviour was mixed in this survey. Around half of survey respondents were aware of YCAP initiatives, with awareness being higher in the more deprived areas. Not surprisingly, those with teenage children were more aware of initiatives than others. Around half of respondents were specifically aware of increased police presence but just one in five were aware of police confiscation alcohol from young people, and fewer than one in ten were aware of increased youth worker presence or young people doing visible community service. With regard to these initiatives specifically, there was a high level of awareness from young people (confiscation of alcohol, police patrols, community service), which perhaps highlights that the young people are not communicating their experiences to their families. This clearly stresses that communications is an important element of tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour.

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[8] Hayward, R. and Sharp, C. (2005) Young people, crime and antisocial behaviour: Findings from the 2003 Crime and Justice Survey. Home Office Research Findings 245, London: Home Office

Appendix

The quantitative research was conducted in the following wards and local authority areas

YCAP Area (Alphabetical)	Ward
Barking and Dagenham	Abbey
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Barnsley Dearne South
Birmingham City Council	Northfield
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Bastwell
Blackpool Council	Highfield
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	Rumworth ward
Bournemouth Borough Council	Boscombe East/Boscombe West
Bradford Metropolitan District Council	Holmewood ward
Brighton and Hove City Council	East Brighton
Bristol City Council	Hillfields
Camden Council	Gospel Oak
Coventry City Council	Earlsdon
Croydon London Borough Council	Fairfield
Darlington Borough Council	Park East
Derby City Council	Derwent
Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	Bentley ward
Durham County Council	Pelton
Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council	Highfell
Greenwich London Borough Council	Coldharbour and New Eltham
Hackney	Hackney Central
Halton Borough Council	Hough Green
Hammersmith and Fulham	Shepherd's Bush Green
Haringey London Borough Council	West Green/Bruce Grove
Hartlepool Borough Council	Dyke House ward
Islington London Borough Council	Caledonian
Kingston upon Hull City Council	Drypool Ward
Kirklees Metropolitan Council	Dewsbury East
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Kirkby Central
Lambeth	Larkhall
Lancashire County Council	Ribbleton
Leeds City Council	Beeston and Holbeck
Leicester City Council	Braunstone Park & Rowley Fields
Lewisham	Lewisham Central Ward
Liverpool City Council	Kensington
Manchester City Council	Ardwick
Middlesbrough Council	Thorntree
Newcastle City Council	Byker
Newham London Borough Council	Beckton
North East Lincolnshire Council	West Marsh Ward
North Lincolnshire Council	Brumby ward
North Tyneside Council	Wallsend
Nottingham City Council	Radford Park/Berridge
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	Medlock Vale
Peterborough City Council	Stanground East/Stanground Central
Plymouth City Council	Honicknowle
Portsmouth City Council	Fratton
Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council	Grangetown

Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	Balderstone and Kirkholt
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Rawmarsh
Salford City Council	Langworthy
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	Smethwick
Sheffield City Council	Burngreave
Slough Borough Council	Britwell
South Tyneside Council	Beacon and Bents
Southampton City Council	Millbrook
Southend on Sea Borough Council	Southchurch
Southwark Council	Peckham
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	Moss Bank
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	Parkfield & Oxbridge
Stoke on Trent City Council	Bentilee and Townsend
Sunderland City Council	Castletown
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	Denton North East
Torbay Council	Blatchcombe
Tower Hamlets	Mile End
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	Priory Ward
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council	Airedale and Ferry Fryston
Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council	Pheasey Park Farm
Wigan Council	West Leigh
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council	Seacombe