

## **A Guide to Anti-social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts**

1. Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) are both comparatively recent developments designed to put a stop to anti-social behaviour by the individuals who are subject to them. But they work in very different ways, and these differences will inform the judgement of professionals on which of them may be the best option in any particular case.
2. The most obvious difference is that the ASBO is a statutory creation, and carries legal force; the ABC is an informal procedure, though not without legal significance. Both types of intervention are aimed at stopping the problem behaviour, rather than punishing the offender. Because the ABC is a voluntary contract, it has greater flexibility, while the ASBO, because of its more formal status, offers advantages in terms of enforcement.
3. Examples of anti-social behaviour that can be tackled by ASBOs and ABCs include:
  - Harassment of residents or passers-by
  - Verbal abuse
  - Criminal damage
  - Vandalism
  - Noise nuisance
  - Writing graffiti
  - Engaging in threatening behaviour in large groups
  - Racial abuse
  - Smoking or drinking alcohol while under age
  - Substance misuse
  - Joyriding
  - Begging
  - Prostitution
  - Kerb-crawling
  - Throwing missiles
  - Assault
  - Vehicle crime.

### **The relationship between ASBOs and ABCs**

4. It is important that all concerned should understand that ASBOs and ABCs are in no sense competing for business. Both are potentially extremely powerful tools for dealing with cases of anti-social behaviour, and it will be very much a matter for the individual practitioner to decide which of them it might be appropriate to go for in any particular case. It is particularly important to dispel any impression that ASBOs should be regarded as a last resort, only to be tried when other interventions such as acceptable behaviour contracts have already failed. An ASBO has a minimum duration of 2 years but has no maximum time for which it can be awarded. Where an ABC is selected as the best option, it is recommended that it should contain a statement that the continuation of unacceptable behaviour may lead to an application for an ASBO. Where a contract

is broken, that should be used as evidence in the application for an ASBO. It may also be possible to use the evidence of anti-social behaviour which was originally collected for the ABC in any subsequent ASBO application.

### **Impact on Future RAF Service**

5. OC P1/PSF is to take into consideration that any community order awarded implies that the Serviceman has failed to meet the requirements of AP1 – Ethos, Core Values and Standards of the RAF and should be recognised by appropriate Administrative Action which may include discharge. In all cases, OC P1/PSF is to seek advice from Air Personnel Casework in the first instance.

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