



Home Office



Ministry  
of Justice

Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson  
DBE MP  
Minister of State for Policing, Fire  
and Crime Prevention

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

Alex-Davies-Jones MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of  
State

Baroness Newlove of Warrington  
Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales  
House of Lords  
London  
SW1A 0PW

09 January 2025

**Government response: 'Still living a nightmare: Understanding the experiences of victims of anti-social behaviour'**

Thank you for your report '*Still living a nightmare*' into the experiences of victims of persistent anti-social behaviour (ASB) and the insight it provides.

We want to assure you that tackling ASB is a top priority for this Government, as a key part of the Safer Streets Mission, and that we are committed to ensuring better support and information is available to victims of ASB. We are clear that ASB causes harm and misery to individuals and communities, the stark reality of which is emphasised in your report.

We have carefully considered your report and the recommendations and have provided our response contained within this letter and will be publishing this on GOV.UK. We also welcome the opportunity to engage with you on any of the recommendations as we progress this further and look forward to meeting you in the near future.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP  
Minister of State for Policing, Fire and Crime Prevention

Alex-Davies Jones MP  
Minister for Victims and Violence Against  
Women and Girls (VAWG)

## Introduction

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is not merely a nuisance. It has devastating consequences, corroding people's freedom, damaging their mental health, and ultimately undermining their sense of home. That is why cracking down on ASB is a top priority for this Government, and a key part of our Safer Streets Mission. As well as tackling the causes of ASB, we know that more must be done to help its victims. That is why we committed in our manifesto to ensuring that victims of ASB can access the information and support they need, and we are carefully considering how best to achieve this.

This Government has committed to five core Missions which seek to address some of the fundamental challenges that our society is facing over the next 10 years. The Safer Streets Mission aims to halve violence against women and girls, halve knife crime and restore confidence in policing and the criminal justice system.

On 5 December 2024, the Government published its Plan for Change, which sets out plans to crackdown on ASB through piloting the new Respect Order to enable swift enforcement against prolific offenders and a dedicated ASB lead officer working with communities to develop an ASB action plan. Neighbourhood police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are a key partner in the fight against ASB. We are working with policing to implement a new Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee which will include, amongst other things, restoring patrols to town centres, delivering an additional 13,000 police officers, PCSOs and special constables in neighbourhood policing roles and ensuring every community has a named officer to turn to.

We recognise that no single agency can reduce ASB alone. Achieving that goal will rely on police, local authorities and partner agencies working effectively together. These agencies are best placed to understand what is driving the behaviour in question, the impact that it is having and to determine the most appropriate response.

We will legislate in the first session Crime and Policing Bill to ensure that powers the police need to deal with ASB are as effective as possible. This will include the new Respect Order, which will enable agencies and courts to place tough restrictions on the behaviour of persistent and harmful adult ASB offenders, with tough enforcement and sentencing options if orders are breached.

However, we know that more must be done to tackle ASB and to support victims. We would like to thank you for publishing this report which highlights a number of recommendations for the Government on improving identification of persistent ASB, support for victims and improved utilisation of the ASB Case Review. We are grateful to everyone involved in publishing this report and for also to the victims themselves for sharing their own lived experiences so candidly to help inform the recommendations. It is vital that we enhance the collaboration and communication between statutory agencies to make this a holistic approach to support victims of ASB better and to send a clear message to perpetrators that any form of ASB is unacceptable.

Our response is set out below and has been developed in consultation with the College of Policing, National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. We are also working closely with the NPCC lead for ASB to consider the recommendations alongside the recently published [HMICFRS Report](#) on ASB.

## **Improving identification of persistent anti-social behaviour and support for victims**

Your report highlights that victims of ASB often do not receive the right support, or that support is not tailored to their individual needs. To clarify the rights and entitlements of victims of ASB to ensure that victims can access the support available to them, the MoJ is taking two key steps. First, we are carefully considering the implementation of measures under the Victims and Prisoners Act 2024. This includes launching a public consultation to gather input on how best to update the Victims' Code for all victims of crime. We are exploring ways to make the Code clearer, including making clear that victims of ASB, where the criminal threshold is met, can benefit from relevant entitlements under the Code. We plan to launch this consultation early next year and will continue to engage closely with you on this issue as the consultation progresses. We will also work with Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to ensure that they are promoting access to support services for victims of crime in their engagements with ASB practitioners, relevant partners, and victims, and via any involvement they may have in the ASB Case Review process.

Second, we are considering how to ensure information on the ASB Case Review is easily accessible and understandable and that victims know what they can expect. The MoJ will update the Victims and Witnesses website to include a dedicated section for ASB and the Case Review, with links to useful information and services. In addition, the Home Office will update the statutory guidance on ASB powers to ensure that any changes to the Victims' Code following the public consultation are reflected in the guidance. This guidance will feature examples of good practice to illustrate what an effective Case Review should look like.

We also recognise that identifying persistent ASB can be challenging for operational bodies, which has an impact on the response and the subsequent support for victims. We know that improved training is the best way to address this. This is why the Home Office is providing initial funding for the national rollout of the Neighbourhood Policing Pathway (NPP) programme which is being delivered by the College of Policing (CoP) and aims to support neighbourhood policing teams by equipping officers with the skills required to reduce ASB. We recognise the need to incorporate two new ASB training elements into the CoP training package. This training will aim to strengthen officers' understanding of (1) the harms caused by ASB and (2) how to appropriately identify and record criminal offending in the context of ASB. The Home Office is liaising with the CoP about the NPP programme which will be delivered to all neighbourhood officers and PCSOs. The first three modules of the programme are currently being piloted in 11 forces and a further three modules being developed. One of the modules included in the pilot focuses specifically on ASB and will help to equip neighbourhood officers with the skills they need to identify and record 'course of conduct' ASB offences and provide officers with a deeper understanding of the harms caused by ASB. It is worth noting that this training recommendation aligns with those set out in the recent [HMICFRS Report](#) and the Home Office will ensure that the response to both of these reports are aligned.

You also recommend developing a process model for structured ASB risk and vulnerability assessments, in order to identify and record whether the victim has any vulnerability-related risks as soon as an ASB report is made. We are aware you have received a separate response from the CoP on this recommendation, which provides further information about how risk and vulnerability assessments are undertaken by police forces. We understand that all forces already have a process in place to make these assessments, however this is not standardised across the country. Having discussed this recommendation with CoP and NPCC, we consider it is important to retain flexibility in how police forces undertake risk and vulnerability assessments, to ensure police can identify risks and work effectively with

partner agencies in their local area. We will continue to explore what can be done to improve the risk assessment procedure for victims of ASB whilst ensuring the responsibility for this is appropriately shared across a local level.

Finally, you will be aware this Government has signalled its intention to consider strengthening the powers as part of your role, ensuring more accountability when the needs of victims of ASB are not being met. First session legislation offers us an opportunity to do this. We are carefully considering the options in this space and will share more details in due course.

### **Improving collaboration and communication between statutory agencies**

We are aware of the important role played by Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in delivering the local response to ASB and crime. We are considering any future reform of CSPs carefully, in line with the Government's Safer Streets Mission and Home Office priorities including the roll out of new Young Futures Prevention Partnerships, and the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. The development of Young Futures Prevention Partnerships will aim to capitalise on the good work that already exists between agencies regarding crime prevention, bringing together local partners to identify at-risk young people, and make more effective use of existing youth provisions.

We agree to update the statutory guidance on ASB Powers to recommend that victims should have a Single Point of Contact (SPoC) within the lead ASB Case Review agency. We will set out that the SPoC should ease the process by liaising between the victim and multiple agencies and being proactive in helping the case to result in a better outcome for the victim.

### **Improving awareness and use of the anti-social behaviour Case Review**

We recognise that a key element to supporting victims of persistent ASB is the ASB Case Review. Introduced by the *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (2014 Act)*, the Case Review is an important mechanism which enables victims of persistent ASB to request a multi-agency review of their case from any of the main responsible agencies (such as the council, police and housing providers). We want to ensure the Case Review is accessible to those who need it and therefore welcome your recommendations on making it a more accessible process.

Alongside updating the guidance for victims as noted above, we intend to implement these recommendations by updating our statutory guidance on ASB powers for frontline professionals under the 2014 Act to:

- set out what the rights of victims of ASB are in relation to the ASB Case Reviews;
- recommend that Case Reviews should have independent chairs so victims feel confident that their Case Review will be dealt with fairly and objectively;
- encourage the agencies involved in the Case Review to communicate the progress of the case and (where appropriate) provide victims with an opportunity to be involved in any meetings to share their views and help inform the action plan.

In terms of appeal rights and challenging decisions on the Case Review decision itself, we will also explore options of how to make this clearer in guidance. We believe this will be the swiftest way to give effect to these recommendations. We will also keep the position under review so we can return to the question of legislation should that become necessary in the future.

The Home Office is also currently exploring how data on the ASB Case Review can be captured as part of regular statistical data collection from the police. In addition, we will also explore options for strengthening the role of PCCs in the ASB Case Review, for example through PCCs promoting awareness of the ASB Case Review, monitoring its use or providing a route for victims to query decisions.

### **Improving the reporting and resolution landscape for anti-social behaviour**

Under the 2014 Act, agencies in each local government area must carry out an ASB Case Review in cases where an application for one is made and at least three complaints have been made about the ASB to which the application relates, however agencies may also decide that the threshold for a review is met at another point based on criteria outlined in their local review procedures. This threshold is deliberately flexible, to allow local areas to decide how best to operate the Case Review according to local circumstances.

The report highlights that local areas can add additional caveats to the threshold required for victims to request a Case Review. We will strengthen the guidance for frontline professionals to make it clear that whilst there is flexibility, we recommend that areas should consider these additional caveats carefully, and that they are able to explain any changes to the standard threshold and justify any negative impact this may have on victims. We will also ensure that the victim-facing guidance on the Case Review explains that local areas can have different thresholds for activating the Case Review and why this is needed. We will make sure to reflect this change in the updated guidance for victims.

In relation to your recommendation of updating the guidance to encourage the use of integrated IT systems that allow for data sharing of ASB reports and victims risk assessments between local agencies, the Home Office supports the use of integrated IT systems and data sharing for this purpose at a local level. It is for local agencies to determine which IT systems they use based on local capabilities, systems and need. More generally, you will be aware that as part of the programme of police reform which the Home Secretary recently announced, we will be introducing nationwide standards for procurement, shared services and specialist functions.

### **Conclusion**

We would like to thank you once again for your report and your recommendations, and hope that implementation of the recommendations set out above will help to improve support for victims of ASB. We will continue to liaise with other organisations including CoP and NPCC to improve police training and risk assessments in regard to victims of ASB and welcome any further thoughts from your office on how these changes could be implemented. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that the experience of victims is at the forefront of our efforts to tackle ASB.