

**TACKLING
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

***THAMES VALLEY POLICE
CHILTERN VALE POLICE AREA***

INSPECTOR MICHAEL PETFORD

SUMMARY

The Wycombe Partnership against Anti-Social Behaviour is a process by which problem-solving is applied to people who are responsible for anti-social behaviour. It is an infrastructure project that delivers agreed solutions and action plans, to cross cutting problems, by means of case conferencing. In formalising a partnership approach, it has created a working arrangement between agencies, which has been very successful in delivering positive results for wide ranging and often long-standing problems.

The scheme has its genesis in the Housing Act of 1996. That legislation precipitated discussions with partners aimed at exploring how the eviction clauses in the Act could be used more effectively against people responsible for anti-social behaviour. In discussion with partners, it was clear that a more rigorous approach was required which would define the problem, analyse it and consider all options.

Child protection case conferencing was seen as a model for this approach and a number of steps had to be taken in order to facilitate the problem solving. These were:

- robust agreements to share information.
- joint management of the case conferencing process.
- joint action planning with an agreement to support partners work towards resolving problems.
- monitoring of the results, through a practitioners group and review of the whole process, through an executive group.

A formal process and mechanism for anti-social behaviour case conferencing was agreed in 1998.

The partnership includes Thames Valley Police, Wycombe District Council, the Education, Youth and Social Services, Environmental Health, the local Mediation Scheme and Housing Associations. Other relevant agencies and organisations are included as required. Each agency agrees to provide representatives to case conferences where it is appropriate and they can put forward cases for consideration. The Police and the District Council have provided staffing to support the infrastructure.

In 1999 ninety six cases were considered and action plans drawn up. Case conferences were held for fifty four of these. Actions varied in approach depending upon the specific problem and circumstances.

The range of solutions have been very wide and have included the police helping Education Welfare officers take a persistent truant and known offender to school and, in another case, a jointly supported application for an Anti-social Behaviour Order.

The anti-social behaviour case conferencing has been included as a significant aspect of the Wycombe Community Safety Strategy. The Strategy Group can address broader issues, which are identified through the case conferencing.

TACKLING ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

What did the project set out to achieve ?

The overall aim of the anti social behaviour initiative is to tackle problems of minor crime and anti social behaviour, in a co-ordinated and systematic fashion.

The initiative has resulted in an overarching process, through which these problems can be tackled. The issues that emerge from the process are tackled by applying problem solving principles in each individual case. The initiative recognises, that it is important to problem solve the factors that contribute to anti social behaviour, as well as the behaviour itself. The process acts as a catalyst to initiate work on problems identified from a wide range of sources and includes single agency referrals, as well as looking at issues which cross the boundaries between one or more agencies.

This aim was formulated for a number of reasons.

Firstly, there was a common recognition, among partner agencies, that the existence of certain background risk factors, increases the potential for crime and anti social behaviour to occur. This was coupled with the knowledge, that long term problem solving, around anti social behaviour, could only be achieved by taking into account all relevant factors in each situation. Potential solutions therefore, lie in tackling the risk factors, as well as dealing directly with the offending behaviour.

Secondly, there was the recognition that the statutory agencies within Wycombe District, did not, at that time, work together in a way that could deliver effective multi agency solutions to minor crime, social nuisance and 'quality of life' issues.

Thirdly, the initiative sought to improve both communication and information sharing between relevant agencies, to enable a framework for problem solving to be developed.

Finally, there is much evidence to suggest that low level crime and anti social behaviour can have a significant influence on the fear of crime, among local communities. In tackling this behaviour, the initiative sought to reduce fear of crime and at the same time, instil confidence in the police, local authority and other agencies, involved with crime reduction and community safety.

What was the nature of the problem ?

At the outset there was no co-ordinated approach to tackle anti social behaviour problems that involved other agencies. There was no cross referencing between agencies and no incentive to look beyond a single agency solution in most cases. Instead of jointly owning problems, there was a tendency to refer them on to whichever single agency appeared best placed to deal with them.

This lack of a co-ordinated approach, produced a number of inconsistencies and meant that in the vast majority of cases, it was not possible to achieve a holistic solution. Although an individual agency could often provide immediate remedies, these were generally short term and failed to address the heart of the problem. Also, individual actions carried out in isolation,

often produced different results, depending on the individual circumstances of the each case. In addition, and most importantly, single agency actions, taken without reference to partner organisations, could impact upon the actions of those partners. A series of unco-ordinated actions, taken without consultation would be much less likely to provide a lasting solution. In fact, this approach could have a detrimental effect with actions of different agencies working against each other. This would make it far more difficult to achieve a lasting solution.

Therefore, the initiative sought to create a commonly agreed approach to problems. This included a common framework, within which, problems could be raised, information shared and co-ordinated action taken. In order to achieve this, it was necessary for the framework to be consistent, comprehensive, fully agreed and endorsed by all the agencies involved. The initiative sought to provide accountability for agencies, within the framework. This was seen as essential to the success of the partnership and was something that had not existed previously. The initiative also included a standardised monitoring and evaluation system.

How was the problem identified ?

S At this time, 1997, the foundations of the partnership had already been laid by early work carried out between High Wycombe Police and other partners. We had worked together with Wycombe District Council to use the powers under the Housing Act 1985, to tackle tenants involved in anti social acts. We also had strong links with local mental health services and youth justice services. In 1996, a new Housing Act was introduced, which enhanced these powers in relation to anti social , tenants and provided local authorities with extra tools to deal with them. Despite the early work that we had carried out, no co-ordinated framework had been developed for use of these powers.

Why was this problem prioritised over other work ?

There was a local need to develop the partnership work that had taken place. This was important, not just for our work with the local authority, but to enable this work to be linked in with other agencies. Although there were already examples of joint police and local authority work on tenancy issues, it was felt that our solutions should be more inclusive. We needed to find a system that tried to get to the `root' of problems, in order to provide, long term solutions, beyond simply exercising the option of eviction.

The Crime and Disorder Act was in it's formative stages and this induced a broad local debate around anti social behaviour and juvenile offending. This debate enabled us to focus on how individual agencies should be involved and the role that could be played by partnerships in advancing this work.

At the same time *there* were ever increasing demands upon the resources of Thames Valley Police and other agencies. Working in partnership, in areas of common concern, was seen as the most practical and efficient solution in an effort to balance those demands. One of the most significant potential savings from this style of joint working, was in terms of staff time across all agencies. The attainment of lasting solutions would enable agencies to refocus their efforts on other areas of core business and concern.

Thames Valley Police was very keen to advance it's problem solving approach, but at that time our partners were not formally included in this work. It was necessary for them to be included and engaged with it. Thames Valley's philosophy of problem solving, meant that it was embedded in our multi agency work. We were engaged in action planning, for current

problems, a 'here and now' strategy and this had become our core business. Action planning and problem solving now needed to become additional core business for all partner agencies

Thames Valley Police was already involved in multi agency case conferencing. The success of child protection conferencing had shown that it was possible to create a model of multi agency work that was capable of tackling problems which were multi disciplinary in nature and required a range of actions, to provide a holistic solution. It also showed that problems which initially appeared intractable, could be solved, if tackled in a co-ordinated fashion.

Who was involved in identifying the problem ?

The problems relating to anti social behaviour were identified jointly by High Wycombe Police and Wycombe District Council. As already mentioned, our work to tackle anti social behaviour had begun by enforcing tenancy agreements. This work highlighted the necessity for a framework, within which to consider the wider implications that this work had for the police, council and other agencies.

How was the problem defined ?

The problem faced by the agencies involved in the partnership, was that a disproportionate amount of crime and anti social behaviour was caused by a few individuals. Analysis of the early tenancy cases dealt with by Wycombe District Council and High Wycombe Police revealed, that certain individuals were consistently coming to the attention of both agencies. It was felt that this situation would be replicated across other agencies. In order to reduce a large proportion of crime and anti social behaviour in the local area, the solution rested with tackling the offending behaviour of those individuals. The solutions that could be applied in order to do this were potentially very wide ranging and far greater than those that could be provided by a single agency alone. They were certainly not matters for the police to deal with in isolation. At that stage we did not know the links that known offenders had with other agencies. In fact, in most cases, no single agency had knowledge of it's clients links with other agencies and organisations. It was therefore necessary to create these links and understandings about the extent to which all agencies were affected by individual offenders. It was mutually beneficial for those agencies to come to an agreement regarding joint processes and arrangements. Multi agency information sharing was therefore, the most important initial building block of the partnership.

How was the problem dealt with ?

The first stage of dealing with individual problems was to develop a jointly agreed protocol for information sharing between partner agencies. A number of possible models were considered, including some used by the Metropolitan Police and Thames Valley's own Saladin framework, used for the resolution of firearms incidents. Local Authority protocols were also explored.

It became clear that there was a need for work within the protocol to be co-ordinated and that it was necessary to employ a basic investigator. This individual would carry out preparatory work and provide the links between agencies in individual cases. In the early stages, it was not clear whether it was necessary for this person to come from one particular agency or indeed which agency was best placed to provide that person. One of the considerations in

trying to assign this post was that each agency had to be able to see information sharing and joint problem solving as relevant to them individually.

A post of anti social behaviour co-ordinator was created within High Wycombe Police to conduct this work on behalf of the partnership. This was a Police Constable post. The remit of the post, was to draw up a protocol and information sharing agreement, that would be acceptable to the major partners to the initiative. Wycombe District Council also provided officer time to support the project. A steering group was formed with members from High Wycombe Police, Wycombe District Council, Social Services and Probation, as well as other local social landlords and representatives of voluntary organisations. All work was "overseen by the steering group.

Initially a large amount of work was carried out, to deal with the legal aspects of information sharing and joint agency working. The issue of data protection was one which required time and energy to resolve. Much of this work involves officers from Wycombe District Council Housing and Legal Services departments, as well as High Wycombe Police.

Once a formal protocol had been agreed, the partnership began to take on a caseload. The role of the anti social behaviour co-ordinator, became one of overseeing and facilitating cases. The co-ordinator acted as central referral point for cases and arranged case conferences as required. In the case of Wycombe District Council Housing department, a liaison officer was appointed and regular meetings were held to discuss the progress of cases and to develop new ones. The co-ordinator established a network of links within the other partner agencies, so that he was in a position to take and to make referrals as appropriate.

The problem solving mechanism starts in each case, with the co-ordinator. He liaises directly with the originating agency. If it is clear that two or more agencies have a potential input to a problem, a case conference will be arranged. Agency input may be in the form of sharing information already known about the individuals or situation being considered. It can also involve undertaking to carry out future actions. In most cases, the cross flow of information and discussion of the issues surrounding cases, helped to formulate a plan for resolution of the case.

Once the problem has been identified, resolution is undertaken by using the SARA problem solving model. This model provides a series of steps to be taken when addressing a problem. It is a process that is capable of 'repeating' itself, so that each individual action can be analysed, on route to a final solution.

The model consists of the following elements:-

S. Scanning

A. Analysis

R. Response

A. Assessment

This process can be used as often as necessary in any individual case, until an effective response or set of responses has been reached. The model allows assessment of each response which in turn informs future decision making, within each case. It can also be used as a aid for future ,cases. The advantages that arise from this model are:-

1. That each problem is tackled in a structured fashion
2. Action plans are drawn up and implemented
3. A lasting solution is likely to be achieved

Consideration is also given to the triangle of crime reduction model, where problems are examined from the victim, offender and location perspectives.

How successful was this approach ?

The success of this approach to dealing with anti social behaviour, can be measured in a number of ways. Firstly, the number of cases dealt with and case conferences held.

The partnership commenced practical operation in mid 1998. The number of cases dealt with since then are as follows:-

1998. (Sept to Dec) 55 cases including 18 case conferences

1999. 96 cases including 54 case conferences

2000. (Jan to May) 63 cases including 21 case conferences

The partnership has agreed a common monitoring grid for use in each case and evaluation is conducted. The very nature of this work is such that common evaluation criteria are hard to set. Each case is considered on it's individual merits. success is judged on criteria such as:-

A reduction in calls to agencies

A reduction in staff time to deal with the problem

Successful referral of individuals to support services, treatment programmes etc.

The following examples may help to illustrate the practical work of the partnership.

1. Police were regularly called to the Appleton family home, following rows between Mr and Mrs Appleton, that affected the neighbours. Mrs Appleton was usually drunk and often became aggressive with police officers, to the extent that she had to be arrested. The Appleton children had been placed on the at risk register. Between 1992 and 1999 police had been called to the address, approximately forty times per year and Social Services case conferences had been called in relation to the children

The co-ordinator for anti social behaviour became involved following concerns from neighbours, that the situation had deteriorated and worries about the behaviour of the children at school. Following a case conference, the marriage guidance organisation, Relate, and a local charity, Addiction Counselling Trust, both became involved. Later, Wycombe counselling service became involved to deal with other matters that had been raised within the family.

It is now six months since the final case conference was held and police have received no calls to the address in that time. Social Services report that the children are all performing well at school.

2. A local 15 year old youth, Barry Furnell came to police attention by making allegations of street robbery. On each occasion he claimed to have been robbed at knife point, by a group of black youths and he began to threaten revenge attacks. Furnell made four such reports in a three week period, but on each occasion, no evidence of an offence could be found.

Upon referral to the anti social behaviour co-ordinator, enquiries revealed that Furnell was suffering from a form of Autism, known as Aspergers syndrome. He was being violent at home, having assaulted both his parents and was having problems at school. It appeared that his parents were in a state of denial as to his condition. Furnell attended a special needs school but this did not cater directly for his particular needs.

A case conference was held following which a programme of specialised help was devised for both Furnell and his family. This was drawn up jointly, by his school, doctor and psychologist, Social Services and the local Aspergers support group. For the first time, Furnell was offered the proper help and support that his condition required. He has not come to police notice since.

3. Alvin Stevens had been causing problems of an anti social nature for many years. He is an alcoholic who can easily become extremely violent. He would regularly steal from local shops and threaten and intimidate shop staff. He played loud music day and night and would intimidate and assault neighbours who complained. The anti social behaviour co-ordinator was originally involved in helping the council to evict Stevens from his house in the town.

Stevens' behaviour continued when he moved in with his girlfriend and her eight children. The next door neighbour had to seek medical treatment and her son's school performance deteriorated considerably following repeated threats and harassment. He subsequently failed most of the GCSE's that he had been expected to pass. Stevens' behaviour was also affecting his girlfriends children's behaviour. Police were called to the house in excess of seventy times in one year and although he was often arrested, on many occasions charges were often not appropriate and court appearances were confined to minor matters.

Several case conferences were held and resulted in help being offered for the family through Social Services and to tackle Stevens' alcoholism. Despite this, no progress was made and a decision was finally taken to apply for an anti social behaviour order. This was successfully obtained and Stevens remained quiet for two months. He then breached the order and was jailed for four months. Stevens was released from prison two months ago and has not come to police notice since. Work is still ongoing to tackle his alcoholism, building on previous work undertaken by the partnership and by prison staff..

The anti social behaviour partnership has thrived in the two years since it's inception. It's capacity is limited solely by the ability of staff to service the workload, but there has been no shortage of cases capable of being examined under this process. Referrals to the co-ordinator have come from Police Officers, Wycombe District Council Housing and Environmental Health departments and Housing Associations within the district.

The co-ordinator has built up a library of organisations and groups to whom referrals can be made in appropriate cases. In many cases, personal contacts have been made which have proved useful in other cases.

In addition to the caseload, the structure of the partnership has also been expanded and improved.

The steering group continues to meet on a regular basis to consider practical and strategic issues. At a strategic level, these include publicity and media issues, the provision of training and education and the use of restorative justice techniques, in the resolution of disputes. A training package has been drawn up to inform other organisations, particularly Housing Associations, of the partnership's work.

Publicity has been produced in the form of a leaflet, which is available at all Police stations and council buildings throughout the district. It includes basic advice and details of useful contacts.

The work of the Steering group is overseen by an Executive group, made up of chief officers from the main agencies involved. The existence of this group demonstrates the importance that is attached to the anti social behaviour work.

Membership of the partnership has expanded and now includes the following organisations:

Thames Valley Police, Chiltern Vale Area.

Wycombe District Council, Housing Department.
Environmental Services.
Community Safety Department.
Legal services Department.

Bucks Probation Service.

Bucks County Council, Social Services, Children and Families Section.
Social Services, Mental Health Team.
Youth and Community
Education Service

Wycombe Victim Support.

Wycombe Racial Incidents Group.

Wycombe Mediation Service.

Other information

Chiltern Vale Police Area, covers the Local Authority Districts of Wycombe, Chiltern and part of South Bucks. Although the partnership was initially focused in Wycombe District, there have been some cross border issues with neighbouring districts and there are plans to extend the initiative across the whole Police Area. One important mechanism that has been used to 'mainstream' this work, within districts and partner agencies, is the local Community Safety Strategies.

The anti social behaviour partnership, is an integral part of the Community Safety Strategy in Wycombe District. Objective 3 of the strategy is:-

'To tackle specific crime problems by working with offenders'

The actions that accompany this objective include:-

'We will further develop the use of the anti social behaviour policy'

'The use of anti social behaviour orderswill be considered in appropriate cases'

Similarly, the Community Safety Strategy in Chiltern District, emphasises the importance of work on anti social behaviour. It's strategic aim states `.....**the partner agencies will identify patterns, causes and effects of anti social behaviour and work to reduce it's impact on communities and individuals across Chiltern District'**.

Members of the Chiltern Community Safety group, have seen the work that has been carried out in Wycombe and are keen to adopt a similar approach.

The introduction of anti social behaviour orders (ASBO's) under the Crime and Disorder Act, has added to the possible resolutions available to the partnership. Equally, the partnership has provided a structured framework within which consultation and decision making can be made in relation to ASBO's. The partnership can also ensure that orders are not applied for in isolation, but are part of a range of measures taken in each case.

The work carried out by the partnership, can also identify strategic issues of local relevance, to the Community Safety strategy groups. The case of Alvin Stevens, prompted a debate within the Wycombe group, on issues around alcohol and how they could be tackled within the district.

Another method used to 'mainstream' anti social issues, with both police and other agencies, has been training. Problem solving sessions for police officers, included an input on the anti social behaviour partnership. Joint agency sessions, were also arranged around crime reduction and these were jointly facilitated by the police and local authority community safety officers.

The creation of the anti social behaviour partnership has taken a great deal of commitment on the part of those involved. It is now providing real benefits to all those involved and to the local communities that they serve.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR LOG

LANDLORD: _____ ADDRESS: _____

TENANT: _____

OTHER KNOWN RESIDENTS:
NAME: _____ AGE: _____ DOB: _____

NAME: _____ AGE: _____ DOB: _____

NAME: _____ AGE: _____ DOB: _____

DATE	BRIEF DETAILS OF INCIDENT	DETAILS HELD BY: (AGENCY)	ACTION TAKEN	REF. NO.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR
MONITORING FORM

CASE NUMBER:		AREA:	PRIMARY CONTACT:
CONFERENCE HELD? Y / N	HOW MANY?	SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT PRESENT?	DURATION OF ISSUE PRIOR TO REPORTING?

NATURE OF COMPLAINT*	SOURCE *	AGENCIES INVOLVED*	ACTION PROPOSED & OUTCOME
MENTAL HEALTH	PLEASE STATE AGENCY & DEPARTMENT.	PLEASE STATE AGENCY & DEPARTMENT.	
NOISE			
ENVIRONMENT			
BEHAVIOUR			
ALCOHOL			
DRUGS			
RACISM			
HOMOPHOBIA			
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	NAME & TEL. NO.		
OTHER (PLEASE STATE)			

DATE OF INITIAL CONTACT:	DATE OF CONCLUDING ACTION/EVALUATION:
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*** PLEASE INDICATE CLEARLY OR STATE ALL APPLICABLE ISSUES & AGENCIES INVOLVED.**

PLEASE INDICATE THE PRIMARY ISSUE UNDER NATURE OF COMPLAINT WITH ✓

What The Partnership

involves:

Information about your complaint will be shared with relevant members of The Partnership. Only those who need to know will become involved. Working together like this results in real problems being tackled by the right people, with the aim of preventing crime and improving community safety.

**REMEMBER:
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR
CANNOT BE RESOLVED
WITHOUT YOUR HELP AND
INVOLVEMENT**

If you would like any further information about The Partnership please contact:

Sgt Jacky Carter 01296 396574

or

Sarah Hazel 01494 421876

(Community Services Officer,
Wycombe District Council)

Useful contacts and

numbers:

Police	01494 465888
Emergency	999
WDC Housing Officer	01494 421620
WDC Environmental Services Officer	01494 421743/ 421731/421737
WDC Community Safety Officer	01494 421876
WDC Community Liaison Officer	01494 421107
Wycombe Racial Incidents Group	
Racial Incidents Officer	01296 396666
Race Equality Council	01494 527616
Social Services	01494 475000
Social Services (Emergency Duty Team)	01494 817750
Wycombe Mediation Service	01494 520821
Probation Service	01494 436421

TACKLING

ANTI-SOCIAL

BEHAVIOUR

with your help & involvement

A Partnership Approach



WYCOMBE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour may include :-

Crime and serious nuisance such as drug dealing, unprovoked assault, racial harassment, intimidation, vandalism and damage to property.

and/or

Nuisance, which can be applied to less serious but frequent and annoying behaviour such as lack of control over pets, upkeep of gardens, excessive noise, verbal harassment, boundary disputes and non-permitted use of premises.

What can you do about it?

- Speak to the person responsible for the nuisance (but not when either of you are angry or upset).
- If you want the help of a third party to help resolve the matter with your neighbour, contact the Wycombe Mediation Service on 01494 520821.
- If it is a criminal matter, report the incident to the Police on 01494 465888.
- If it is a racial incident contact the Racial Incident Officer on 01296 396666.
- If you or the person responsible is a tenant of the Council or a Housing Association, speak to the Landlord about the problem.
- If the problem is due to excessive, persistent noise or a public health issue, contact the Environmental Health Division at the Council on 01494 421737.
- If the problem is child-related, or involves children, you may want to contact Social Services on 01494 475000 or the Police on the above number.

How 'The Partnership' can tackle the problem

The Partnership includes :

- Wycombe District Council - Housing Division
- Wycombe District Council - Environmental Services Division
- Wycombe District Council - Community Safety Section
- Chiltern Vale Police
- Social Services
- Local Housing Associations
- Wycombe Mediation Service
- Probation Service
- Wycombe Racial Incidents Group
- Race Equality Council
- Victim Support