



Practice Note 3

Project Name: Anti-Social Behaviour Problem Solving Partnership

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Topic Areas: Public Space Safety, Partnership Working, Environment Safety, Personal Safety, Offending Management.

Project Background and Aims

Argyll and Bute is the second largest local authority area in Scotland. Almost half the population live in the five largest towns with the remainder spread over small population centres and remote areas. Argyll and Bute has a relatively low crime rate. However, within the five main towns – Dunoon, Campbeltown, Rothesay, Oban and Helensburgh – there are localised problems of disorder, anti-social behaviour and vandalism – often related to drug and alcohol misuse. Within these communities and neighbourhoods priority is given to tackling acts of violence and domestic violence, supporting home safety of vulnerable residents and addressing environmental concerns such as noise nuisance, littering, dog fouling, graffiti, fly-tipping and fire-raising.

Due to the large geographical coverage of the local authority area and diversity of communities, the operational aspect of community safety is decentralised through five Area Community Safety Partnerships. These play an important role in delivering local community safety action plans with the broad aim of changing behaviour and attitudes, providing effective interventions and engaging communities in developing sustainable local solutions. The Area Community Safety Partnerships operate in each of the Council's decentralised areas of Bute and Cowal, Helensburgh and Lomond, Mid Argyll, Kintyre and the Islands, Oban, Lorn and the Isles. The Area Community Safety Partnerships are overseen by a centralised Strategic Community Safety Partnership.

Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) is one, albeit important, strand of the wider Community Safety strategy. The aim of the ASB Problem Solving Partnership is to develop an integrated, multi-agency operational approach to tackling ASB. One of the key functions of the Partnership is to ensure that responses to anti-social behaviour in Argyll and Bute reflect local needs and wants, utilising a balanced approach of prevention, intervention and enforcement responses.

The ASB Problem-Solving Partnership oversees ASB Subgroups which operate at ground level within the Area Community Safety Partnerships. The ASB Subgroups not only tackle town centre or neighbourhood hotspots but also cases where individuals are alleged to be perpetrators of ASB and complaints made against them are subject to investigation. The Subgroups are made up of community police officers, housing officers, homeless officers, environmental health officers, social workers and staff from voluntary sector services

Resources

Funding: Argyll and Bute Community Safety Partnership
Staff: Staff in-kind from partners and Council Services, Community Safety Manager, Police Local Authority Liaison Officer
Partners: Strathclyde Police, Argyll and Bute Council, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, Argyll and Bute Women's Aid, NHS Highland, Argyll and Bute Young Scot, Princes Trust Scotland

Monitoring and Evaluation

The work of the ASB sub-groups is reported via progress and evaluation reports to relevant wider partnerships including the Strategic Community Safety Partnership and the 5 Area Community Safety Partnerships. Periodic reports are also submitted to council bodies, community groups, external partners and stakeholders.

Subgroup responses to incidences of ASB are also evidenced in minutes and action plans resulting from interagency problem solving meetings.

Activities

The ASB Subgroups provide a decentralised problem solving framework involving Police, Council Services, Registered Social Landlords and other agencies, such as voluntary organisations, to focus on ASB hotspots and coordinate a multi-agency response to ASB incidents. Operational agreements have been put in place between the various partners to underpin and legitimise the work of the ASB Subgroups. These include:

- Information sharing protocol between Council, Police and Registered Social Landlords in respect of partnership working to tackle ASB.
- Protocol between Strathclyde Police and Argyll and Bute Council in respect of shared responses to anti-social noise nuisance.

- Council and Police service agreement in respect of Public Space CCTV and deployable CCTV (equipment usage, data collection, data ownership and storage).
- Community Safety Partnership action plans which are based upon the Councils planning and performance management framework. Includes action identified to achieve outcomes, success measures, leads and key dates, risks and cross references to local and national outcomes.
- Argyll and Bute Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment and Strategy 2009-2012.

The work of the sub-groups includes collating and analysing statistics and information from partnership agencies to examine the nature and scale of current and emerging community safety issues and patterns. This analysis feeds into the community safety strategic assessment and targets the deployment of resources to identified ASB hotspots, with responses based upon prevention, intervention and, where appropriate, use of legislative measures.

Periodic evaluation reports are provided to the Argyll and Bute Strategic Community Safety Partnership and five Area Community Safety Partnerships to monitor the effectiveness of the sub-groups' targeted responses.

Impact

Information sharing between partners is effective and relevant incident reports are provided by the police to individual partners including council services and Registered Social Landlords. Police analytical reports are also provided where initiatives and hotspot responses are being developed by partners within the sub-groups.

Although action in relation to individual cases of anti-social behaviour is, in many instances, implemented by a specific partner this is often part of a coordinated response to different elements of a problem. Progress made in resolving problems is then reviewed operationally by partners at the ASB sub-group meetings and via fortnightly area summary reports to Police Divisional Tactical Assessment meetings.

A mixture of carrot and stick measures have been applied to resolve specific ASB including advice and personal support measures, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, housing management interventions, deployable CCTV cameras to deter ASB in hotspots and a broad range of diversionary activities such as youth clubs, sports projects and educational interventions.

Lessons Learnt and Sustainability

This structure is beneficial for several reasons. First, the partnership structure fits the population dispersal and geography of the local authority area. Second, expertise is developed within localities as representatives from core services meet regularly to respond to anti social behaviour incidents. Third, the approach builds confidence and understanding between services resulting in a real willingness by partners to share information on anti social behaviour. Fourth and last, the joined-up approach of the ASB Problem-Solving Partnership, which links Local Authority services, police, Registered Social Landlords and the voluntary sector, ensures a coherent response to local ASB issues.

Summary

The ASB sub-groups are a key part of the operational framework implementing multi-agency action to tackle anti social behaviour. The ASB sub-groups deliver action that is based upon prevention, intervention and, where appropriate, enforcement measures. This is delivered and overseen within a wider framework made up of a Strategic Community Safety Partnership at local authority level and five decentralised Area Community Safety Partnerships.

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