



‘Cleaner, Greener Safer Streets’

**Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy
2008/09**

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1. Foreword

Darlington Borough Council is committed to supporting communities by reducing anti-social behaviour. In 2004 the Council (Community Safety) was awarded Beacon Status, the highest Government accolade for excellence in service delivery. However, we cannot be complacent, as a “Leading Edge” Council we will continue to listen to our communities and respond swiftly to those issues that impact upon people’s quality of life.

As Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio holder for Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety I am acutely aware of residents’ concerns about anti-social behaviour. I am committed to ensuring that both the Council and our partners do everything possible to address the problem. During the last few years we have made significant progress in reducing residents’ concerns about litter, graffiti, drunken behaviour and abandoned vehicles, however, residents continue to be concerned about a few individuals who hang around on streets causing problems, and by working together I am confident that we can reduce these concerns.

Anti-Social Behaviour covers a wide range of often complex issues. In developing our approach to the problem it is important to recognise that it is not just about young people, indeed approximately two thirds of anti-social behaviour is caused by adults. It’s about addressing a wide range of behaviours from both young people and adults.

During the past few years the Council has invested significant resources in making Darlington safer. Two Anti-Social Behaviour Officers have been appointed to support residents and take prompt action to stamp out problems. An Environmental Crime Team has been established to address resident concerns regarding littering, dog fouling and other environmental issues. In the last year the team have issued nearly 500 fines and prosecuted 59 people for environmental offences. In addition, Housing Services have two specialist Tenancy Enforcement Officers who work specifically with Council tenants.

We have dedicated staff in a number of schools working with children and parents to improve behaviour and educational attainment. Across the Borough we recruited 140 “*Street Champions*” to become advocates and a voice for their local community, promoting and encouraging people to become involved in addressing a wide range of issues impacting on the area in which they live. In addition, through close working with our partners we continue to target those individuals, both young people and adults, who pose the most risk to local communities.

I am confident that through this strategy “*Cleaner, Greener, Safer Streets*”, which is underpinned by Darlington’s Sustainable Community Strategy, “One Darlington : Perfectly Placed, and with the support of residents and partners, that we will continue to make Darlington a place where good behaviour is the norm and where communities work together to eradicate anti-social behaviour with a firm but fair approach.

Bill Dixon

Deputy Leader, Portfolio holder Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety

2. Vision

Left un-addressed anti-social behaviour can destroy communities, wreck lives and undermine public confidence in local services. Building upon its strong partnership foundations the Council will continue to work with stakeholders and local people to develop sustainable solutions to those issues that have the greatest impact on communities.

The Council is determined to tackle not only the immediate issues impacting upon communities but also to develop longer term sustainable solutions through early intervention and prevention, addressing not only symptoms but also the underlying causes.

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that the Council and its partners do everything possible to make Darlington a safer place to live, work and visit by tackling anti-social behaviour.

3. Introduction

This strategy outlines how the Council intends to work with its partners to tackle the problem of anti-social behaviour within Darlington. Working in partnership the Council aims to achieve sustainable reductions in anti-social behaviour.

The Council will:

- Put communities' first, supporting victims and witnesses, providing reassurance, building confidence and encouraging community cohesion.
- Make use of a wide but balanced, set of interventions including early intervention, prevention and when appropriate enforcement.
- Develop a culture of tackling and not accepting anti-social behaviour.

This Strategy, "Safer Streets", complements a wide range of other strategies that contribute towards making Darlington a safer place to live, work and visit, each of which underpin Darlington's Sustainable Community Strategy, One Darlington : Perfectly Placed.

4. What is Anti-Social Behaviour?

The term anti-social behaviour covers a wide range of issues that have a detrimental impact upon people's quality of life. It is important to recognise that it means different things to different people: something deemed acceptable to one person may be considered anti-social and unacceptable to another. For this reason it is extremely difficult and often impracticable to establish a single definition.

An important factor in the fight against anti-social behaviour is to understand that the location where it occurs has a significant impact upon people's perception and response. For example, a large group of people playing loud music and hanging around on the beach will be deemed acceptable by most, but if the group moves to a street corner on a residential estate then people's views and perceptions change.

Many adults will recall getting together with their friends at a local meeting point, often to kick a ball around, listen to music or play other street games. Children have always, and will continue, to play these sorts of games in their local communities and they should be encouraged to do so safely. However, it is important to recognise that there is a distinction between young people socialising and having fun and those individuals who persistently cause misery for others.

Even at its lowest levels anti-social behaviour can have a devastating impact upon those individuals and communities where it occurs. It increases people's concern about crime, impinges on people's quality of life and can undermine attempts to regenerate and develop cohesive communities.

On many occasions anti-social behaviour will also be criminal in nature, for example drug dealing, it is therefore important that agencies work closely to resolve such issues using the most appropriate means.

There are numerous pieces of legislation that provide a legal framework in which action can be taken against those who engage in anti-social behaviour, each having differing definitions. The most common and widely accepted is that contained within the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, for the purpose of seeking Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). The Act describes anti-social behaviour as:

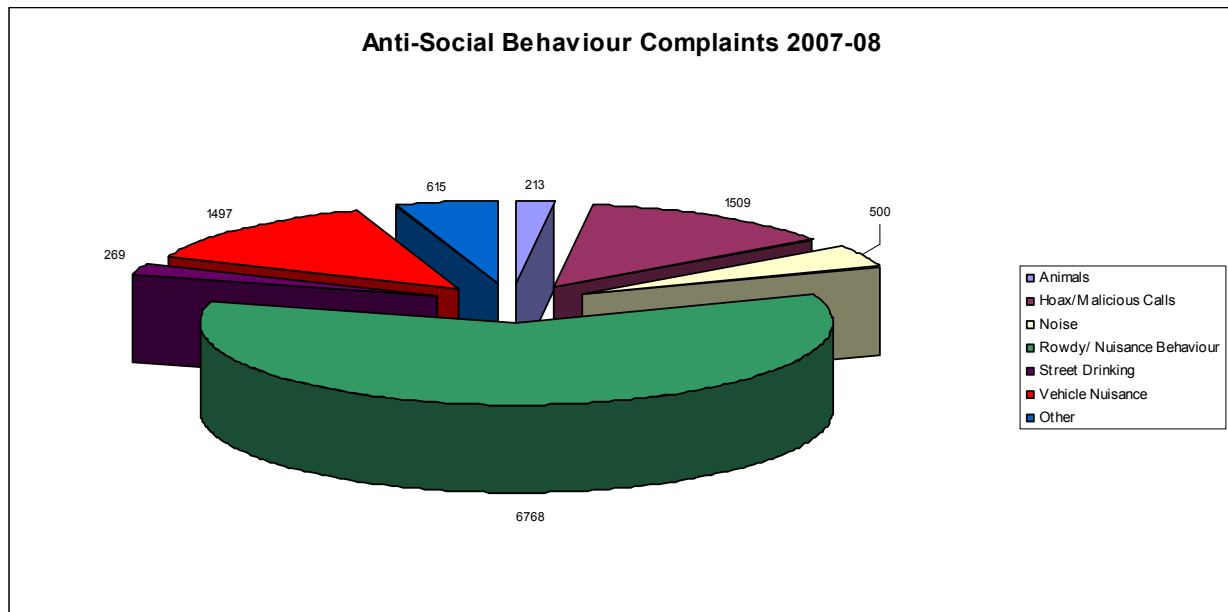
“Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as themselves”

The following list provides an overview of what the Council considers to be anti-social acts:

- Fly tipping
- Litter
- Graffiti
- Street drinking
- Substance Misuse and Drug Dealing
- Begging
- Abandoned vehicles (not stolen/causing obstruction)
- Vehicle related nuisance and inappropriate use of vehicles
- Excessive Noise
- Rowdy/Nuisance behaviour
- Hoax calls to emergency services
- Damage to property
- Intimidation and Harassment
- Animal nuisance
- Prostitution and related activity

This list is not exhaustive and there are many problems that occur in communities that some will consider as anti-social and to others the behaviour will not be a problem. By working closely with the community and partners the Council is determined to make progress in addressing these issues.

5. Anti-Social Behaviour in Darlington



In 2007/08 there were 11,371 anti-social behaviour complaints made to police in Darlington, which is over a 1000 fewer than in the previous year. The most common complaint being rowdy nuisance behaviour followed by hoax and malicious calls and vehicle nuisance, e.g. inconsiderate parking and motorcycle nuisance.

In November 2006 the Council's Community Survey of residents within the Borough told us that 42.6% of residents identified "teenagers hanging around on the streets" as a big or fairly big problem. By 2007 this fell to 38.1%. There were also improvements in residents' concerns regarding litter, with 34.2% of residents identifying this as a big or fairly big problem in 2006 compared to 31.6% in 2007.

Compared to 2006 there had also been a reduction in the number of residents viewing "people dealing drugs" as a problem. Residents also highlighted significant improvements in "people being drunk" with 24.5% identifying this as a big or fairly big problem in 2007 compared to 31.7% in 2006. This strategy aims to improve these perceptions further.

Through Darlington's Local Area Agreement, work is ongoing to develop a comprehensive anti-social behaviour recording system across a range of partner agencies. The new system will enable both the Council and its partners to get a better understanding of the type and extent of anti-social behaviour across the Borough. The new system will bring together a host of data sets from the Council, Police, Fire Service and other partners. This information will then be used to inform both the immediate and longer term response to problems that occur within the Borough.

6. Achievements 2007/08

The Council delivers a wide range of preventative and enforcement services that contribute towards making Darlington a safer place to live, work and visit. During 2007/08 a wide range of initiatives continued to be developed across services to reduce the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour in Darlington, many of which were, and continue to be, supported through Darlington's Local Area Agreements.

Some of our achievements include:

- Through partnership working we have improved attendance and behaviour in our schools.
- Provided intensive support to 7 families through the Family Intervention Project.
- Developed the "Youth Offer" for young people, spelling out what's available for young people do in their leisure time in Darlington. Information available at www.clicktodo.co.uk.
- Installed an additional 7 CCTV cameras in the Borough. There are now 135 cameras covering Darlington.
- Issued 496 Fixed Penalty Notices for environmental crime.
- Secured 3 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.
- Investigated over 2000 complaints of anti-social behaviour (ASB Team Figures).
- Secured 4 Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions, extended 5 Introductory Tenancies and evicted 3 tenants for anti-social behaviour.
- Provided parenting supporting and intervention.
- Ran a week of "Action" in the Northgate Ward addressing community issues.
- Delivered over 70 young people's projects through the DOSH funding.

7. A Partnership Approach

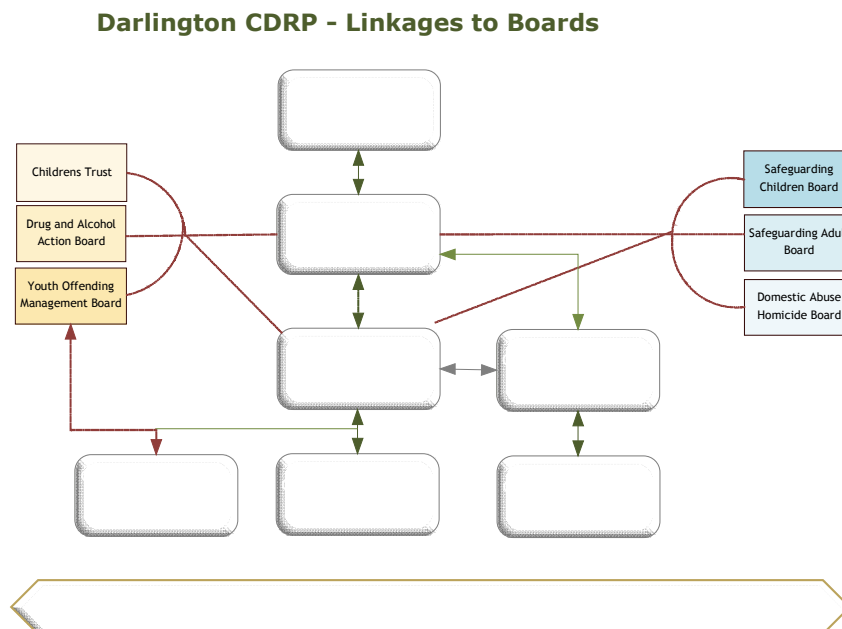
Anti-Social Behaviour cannot be tackled in isolation, it requires robust joint working with both partners and the community including;

- Council Departments
- Police
- Youth Offending Service
- Fire Service
- Primary Care Trust
- Probation Service
- Drug and Alcohol Action Team
- Registered Social Landlords
- Voluntary Groups
- Community and Resident Groups

There is a strong tradition of partnership working within Darlington. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) brings together key stakeholders to work together to support victims and communities by reducing offending, tackling anti-social behaviour and reducing the harm caused by drug and alcohol.

Delivery Mechanisms

The schematic chart below illustrates the current framework in which partners work to address anti-social behaviour:



Darlington Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership responsible for setting the wider strategic agenda for the Borough, delivering One Darlington : Perfectly Placed, the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy.

CDRP Executive Board sets strategy, determines priorities and allocates resources.

CDRP Business Group translates strategy into real outcomes in the community, develops medium and longer-term solutions.

CDRP Problem Solving Group is responsible for delivering activities to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour that occurs in local communities.

Prolific and Priority Offender Group is responsible for developing action plans to prevent individuals from engaging in anti-social behaviour and crime.

Domestic Abuse Steering Group is responsible for the implementation of the Borough's Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Domestic Abuse Network brings together a wide range of partners with an interest in preventing Domestic Abuse, share best practice, ideas and to develop collaborative working.

Drug and Alcohol Action Board develops and implements a range of strategies to tackle drug and alcohol misuse within the Borough.

Youth Offending Service Management Board - oversees the strategic development and operational functions of the Youth Offending Service

Safer Communities Forum - collectively, once a year representatives from the above groups come together to discuss performance, share best practice and develop capacity with the community and voluntary sector.

8. A Firm but Fair Approach

Communities report anti-social behaviour because they want agencies to act quickly to tackle it and to prevent it from happening again. In developing solutions the Council and its partners must:

- Take action to eliminate any threat to individuals or the wider community, protecting victims and witnesses, using all available powers
- Enable the perpetrator to understand the consequences and impact of their behaviour
- Offer advice and access to support services to try to change the perpetrator's behaviour
- Work with individuals, communities and partners to prevent problems recurring

It is essential that the right intervention be used at the right time and there needs to be clarity between the needs of the community and that of the perpetrator.

Reducing anti-social behaviour and building safer communities requires a multi-agency approach across a range of thematic areas. Some examples of the potential options to resolve anti-social behaviour are detailed under each strand below:

Prevention	Education	Early Intervention	Enforcement
High Visibility Patrols	Safer Schools Project	Mediation	Anti-Social Behaviour Orders
Improved street lighting	PHSE lessons	Mentoring	Injunctions
Truancy sweeps	Anti-bullying strategies	Parenting schemes	Parenting Orders
Positive activities for young people	Peer support	Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts	Reparation
Designing out opportunities for ASB	Extended schools	Diversions activity	Fixed Penalty Notices
Community development	Drug and Alcohol Education	Restorative Justice	Dispersal Orders
Community engagement	Addressing tolerance and inter-generational issues	Youth Inclusion Support Projects	Crack House Closures
Positive media coverage	Communication	Mental health	Tenancy Agreement
CCTV	Reducing school exclusions	Drug and alcohol support	Eviction
Streetscene	Street Champions		Criminal penalties
Support diverse groups			Licensing
			Environmental Protection/Enforcement
<i>Reduced Anti-Social Behaviour - Safer Places, Safer People, Safer Streets</i>			

9. Supporting Communities, Building Confidence

There are a range of cross cutting plans and strategies which contribute towards reducing anti-social behaviour within Darlington. These plans come together under the auspice of One Darlington : Perfectly Placed, the Boroughs Sustainable Community Strategy.

Some of the actions within each of these plans are detailed below under each of the Council's anti-social behaviour priorities. These actions are not exhaustive but are intended to provide a snapshot of the type of work the Council is taking forward with its partners. Each of the actions is progressed and monitored within individual service areas of the Council.

Priority 1:

Putting communities first, supporting victims and witnesses, providing reassurance, building confidence and encouraging community cohesion and diversity.

To achieve this priority the Council is committed to:

- Developing its community engagement framework that puts residents and other stakeholders at the heart of shaping and influencing service delivery.
- Developing Neighbourhood Charters with residents on estates suffering anti-social behaviour.
- Providing high visibility patrols in hotspot areas working with colleagues from other agencies.
- Developing its communication methods to raise awareness of the help and support that is available to tackle anti-social behaviour, including making use of all media opportunities.
- Working with the community to promote and encourage residents to become Street Champions.
- Providing a swift and coordinated response to dealing with noise related nuisance.
- Ensuring “designing out crime” forms a key part of the Council’s Planning Guidance.
- Supporting vulnerable, diverse groups subject to crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Delivering the Travel Safety Strategy and School Travel Plan within the Local Transport Plan.

Priority 2:

Make use of a wide but balanced set of interventions including early intervention, prevention and when appropriate enforcement.

To achieve this priority the Council is committed to:

- Working with partners through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Problem Solving Group to develop a more robust intelligence led approach to problem solving, through the provision of appropriate intelligence products.
- Working with partners to integrate the key principles from the Safer Schools Partnership at Eastbourne Academy across other neighbourhoods within the Borough.
- Raising awareness of the harm caused by the misuse of alcohol in schools and other establishments, linking to the Healthy Schools agenda.
- Maximising the issue of enforcement interventions where appropriate using the full range of enforcement powers available.
- Introducing a new case management system for Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Ensuring staff have the right knowledge and skills to do their jobs, through the provision of Problem Solving Training and support.
- Working with Durham and Darlington Casualty Reduction Forum to reduce accidents and anti-social behaviour of motorists.

Priority 3:

Develop a culture of tackling and not accepting anti-social behaviour.

To achieve this priority the Council is committed to:

- Working with Community Groups and Resident Associations to make them aware of what can be done to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour and their role in the process.
- Encouraging residents to resolve minor issues themselves by talking problems through.
- Delivering the Casualty Reduction and Speed Management Strategies to deter anti-social driver behaviour on the road network.
- Publicising details of what support is available and highlight the consequences of engaging in Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Working with individual residents to ensure they play an active part in resolving issues with the support of officers.
- Developing links with diverse groups and promote access to services.

10. What will Success Look Like?

The public must be confident in reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour to both the Council and other partner agencies. As confidence in public services increases it is envisaged that there will be an increase in reporting and as a result the number of recorded incidents may increase, although both the Council and its partners expect that the number of repeat incidents will reduce through effective problem solving measures.

Nationally, the Government use surveys to gauge how people feel about anti-social behaviour in their local community. These survey measures are currently being reviewed and will be included in a new "Place Survey". This survey is prescribed by the Government and will be completed by all Councils every two years. In addition, the Council will continue to carry out its annual Community Survey to gather resident's perceptions and views on anti-social behaviour as well as other matters.

The measures used in both surveys are linked to a new set of 198 National Indicators that came into force in April 2008. There are numerous indicators within the 198 set that are linked to anti-social behaviour, the primary measures include:

- *Perceptions of high levels of anti-social behaviour (NI17)*
- *Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police (NI21)*
- *Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area (NI22)*
- *Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration (NI23)*
- *Satisfaction with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour (NI24)*
- *Satisfaction of different groups with the way the police and local council dealt with anti-social behaviour (NI25).*
- *Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem (NI41)*
- *Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem (NI42)*
- *People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (NI47)*
- *Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents (NI48)*

The Council through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), has a key role in ensuring good performance against each of the measures identified above.

The CDRP has set a target to reduce the number of people who perceive that there is a high level of anti-social behaviour in the area from 23% in 2007/08 to 19.5% by 2010/11.

Performance against this target and the remaining anti-social behaviour indicators will be managed through the CDRP and reported to the Council's Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee. The Place Survey results will also be publicised by the Council and Audit Commission.

The Council expects that success would include;

- A reduction in repeat locations/victims of Anti-Social Behaviour in the Borough.
- Improvements in residents' perceptions.
- Residents being aware of what services are available to tackle anti-social behaviour and how to access them.

11. Resources

The Council supports the delivery of a host of services that are targeted at improving the quality of life for residents in the Borough. Many of these services directly focus on addressing anti-social behaviour e.g. the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, Uniformed Warden Service and other services which have an indirect impact upon anti-social behaviour within the Borough, e.g. provision of good quality youth activities.

In addition to the extensive mainstream investment, the Council actively works with partners to secure external funding to support the delivery of activities to reduce anti-social behaviour. Funding from the Home Office has been secured to develop new and build upon existing initiatives, like the development of the Family Intervention Project, which supports families at risk of losing their home because of their behaviour.

In delivering this strategy the Council will maximise the use of existing resources ensuring, through its planning processes, that limited resources are used to support identified need.

12. How to get Support and Advice

Service	Address	Telephone
Safer Communities Unit:	Central House Annexe Gladstone Street DARLINGTON DL3 6JX	01325 346253
Youth Offending Service:	Central House Annexe Gladstone Street DARLINGTON DL3 6JX	01325 346226
Anti Social Behaviour Unit & Uniformed Warden Service:	Central House Annexe Gladstone Street DARLINGTON DL3 6JX	01325 346831
Environmental Protection:	10/11 Houndgate DARLINGTON DL1 5RF	01325 388799
Housing Services (Council Tenants):	Town Hall DARLINGTON DL1 5QT	01325 388542
Youth Service:	Central House Gladstone Street DARLINGTON DL3 6JX	01325 346431
Street Scene:	Vicarage Road DARLINGTON DL1 1JW	01325 388799
Drug & Alcohol Action Team:	DAAT Unit Central House Annexe Gladstone Street DARLINGTON DL3 6JX	01325 346837
Darlington Police:	The Police Station 6 St Cuthbert's Way DARLINGTON DL1 5LB	0345 60 60 365