

Case Study 1: Youth ASB in Woodburn, Dalkeith

Problem

Complaints of youth disorder in the Woodburn area of Midlothian increased month-on-month during autumn 2012, reaching a peak in November with 77 calls in 4 weeks. During a five-month period, a third of all youth calls and nearly a quarter of all vandalism crimes recorded by Police in Midlothian related to Woodburn/Dalkeith area. The source of the problem was a large group of youths engaging in acts of ASB including stone throwing, vandalism to property, increasing in seriousness to racially aggravated hate crimes, and deliberate fireraising.

Intervention

An analytical problem profile was produced which focused on demographics, crime/antisocial behaviour levels, problems experienced in relation to ASB/Crime Type, days and timing of incidents, geographical analysis, causes, and tactics. It also presented some options for consideration with regard to short, medium and long-term recommendations.

In February 2013 a short-life working group (named the Woodburn Community Safety Problem Solving Partnership (PSP)) was set up to co-ordinate a partnership response to tackling ASB in the Woodburn/Dalkeith area. The PSP represented a variety of agencies and groups including social work, education, police, fire, armed forces, local voluntary groups and other stakeholders.

Interventions / tactics actioned by the group were as follows:

- Proactive Police warning visits to the homes of youths identified as being involved
- Warning letters issued to the parents of youths involved
- Diversionary activities (Y2K a local youth organisation based in Mayfield offered the resources of a new worker funded to work with young people on a 1:1 basis) including laser quest, cycling training, mountain biking, boxercise sessions and wall climbing
- Educational inputs to local schools
- MARAC referrals - as some youths were identified as coming from homes where there was domestic abuse
- Increased high visibility police patrols targeting identified areas at peak times
- Community Learning and Development Street workers deployed to identified areas at peak times to engage with youths
- ABCs and warning letters issued to main offending youths
- Informal workshops around Identity and Substance Misuse delivered at High Schools in the area targeting 10 young people from the Woodburn referrals
- Youth drop in sessions at MARC – daily 7.30-9.30pm staffed by Y2K

- Drop-in sessions at the Dalkeith High School promoting summer activities organised by Community Safety

Result

Complaints of youth disorder in Woodburn/Dalkeith decreased by 12% between the period the PSP ran in 2013/14, compared to the same period in 2012/13.

From July 2013 through to January 2014, youth calls in Woodburn/Dalkeith were consistently lower each month than the previous year when the PSP was not in place.

Overall reduction in crimes of vandalism in Woodburn/Dalkeith between 2012/13 and 2013/14, from 228 crimes to 187 respectively (-18%).

Gradual decline in vandalisms in Woodburn/Dalkeith from February 2013 when the PSP was initiated through to January 2014, and from July 2013 the number of vandalism crimes was consistently lower each month than during the previous year when the PSP was not in place.

Of the 23 young people identified as engaging in ASB in the Woodburn/Dalkeith area 16 had previously committed an offence. Of those 16, 13 have shown an improvement in their offending behaviour during the last 12 months. Only two youths had shown an increase in offending behaviour between 2012/13 and 2013/14.

Improvements were observed in the educational attendance rates of seven of the sixteen young people.

The Scottish Community Safety Network undertook a cost benefit calculation for the Woodburn project, formulated using the project report, the court case summaries/outcomes data, funding data from the PSP and the SCSN proxy cost indicator database, with the two activities within the youth call category, vandalism/ASB and malicious fires, being analysed separately with a whole project summary provided at the end. Results of the data and cost savings analysis taken from the available data identify that the vandalism and ASB was a great success with nearly £50,000 in savings as a result of the £2,703 investment.

PROBLEM

Complaints of youth disorder in the Woodburn area of Midlothian - large group of youths engaging in acts of ASB including stone throwing, vandalism to property, increasing in seriousness to racially aggravated hate crimes, and deliberate fireraising.

TACTICS

- Proactive Police home warning visits
- Warning letters issued to parents of youths involved
- Diversionary activities
- Educational inputs to local schools
- MARAC referrals
- Increased high visibility police patrols identified areas at peak times
- Street workers deployed to engage with youths
- ABCs and warning letters issued to main offending youths
- Informal workshops around Identity and Substance Misuse delivered at High Schools
- Youth drop in sessions – daily 7.30-9.30pm
- Drop-in sessions at local High School promoting summer activities

RESULTS

- Complaints of youth disorder decreased by 12%
- Reduction in crimes of vandalism from 228 crimes to 187 respectively (-18%)
- 13 of the 16 youths showed an improvement in their offending behaviour
- 7 of the 16 youths showed improvements in educational attendance rates
- Data and cost savings analysis shows a saving of almost £50,000 as a result of £2,703

Case Study 2: Ms X Party House

Problem

The tenant was a 23 year old unemployed female who was allowing her younger brother and his friends to access the flat and use the dwelling as a party house. Loud music and noise pollution caused by banging of doors and persons shouting attempting to gain access were the main issues. Vandalisms to the stairwell were also linked to the address and threats to neighbours were made by guests of tenant. Ms X had taken up the tenancy in November 2012, soon thereafter the Council ASB team received numerous complaints from all four neighbours and by December 2013 twenty-seven complaints had been received. Ms X was non-cooperative with environmental noise officers and Police who in response to complaints would empty the flat and disperse the occupants (often upwards of 15 individuals). On many occasions the individuals would return and the party resume.

Intervention

In January 2013 a case conference was arranged for Ms X attended by Council Community Safety Team, Housing Team, Police Liaison Officer, Legal Team, Council Solicitor, and Justice of the Peace Officer.

Interventions / tactics actioned by the group were as follows:

- Warning letter issued by Community Safety Team
- Warning visits issued by Housing and Community Safety Officer
- Pre-weekend warning visits by Community Policing Team
- Tenancy Support and Volunteer Agency support offered – declined
- Mediation offered – declined
- Fixed penalty ticket issued by Police and reports issued to PF
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract issued by Community Safety Team – breached 4 times
- ASBO application applied for – granted 03/04/14

Result

Ms X was issued an ASBO on 3 April 2014 – that same evening Ms X breached the ASBO by playing loud music within her address. She appeared at court on 09/04/14 with the case to be heard on 03/02/15. Since then no further complaints have been received by police, council, housing or environmental noise to the address. In summer 2014 Ms X requested a housing move to another area of Midlothian with the primary reason being family support. In conclusion the granting of an ASBO has led to a positive change in Ms X's behaviour.

Case Study 3: Mr X Violent Offender

Problem

Mr X is a 27 year old male residing alone in a small village in Midlothian. Mr X is a violent male with fourteen crimes and thirteen violent assaults committed between January 2012 and December 2013. When under the influence of alcohol he presents a risk to others, in particular shop workers at local convenience stores in the village. Mr X engaged in several acts of ASB and criminality in the vicinity of the shops, including urinating, assault, racially aggravated hate crime and threatening and abusive behaviour.

Mr X has mental health issues which he is prescribed medication for, however when consuming alcohol (mainly at the weekends) Mr X would fail to take his prescribed medication which in turn would lead to more reckless and aggressive behaviour. During 2012 and 2013 it was clear that Mr X's offending behaviour was intensifying and becoming more violent.

Intervention

Interventions / tactics actioned by the group were as follows:

- Incidents concerning Mr X were monitored by weekly ASB tactical and coordinating group
- Mr X was monitored as part of the ASB and Violent Offenders Monitoring Group
- Community Policing Team heightened patrols of areas where Mr X was known to offend
- CRASBO application applied for racial hate crime
- ASB case conference arranged for September 2013 – deemed not appropriate due to lack of consistent and persistent number of ASB incidents.
- Initial warning letter served in May 13.
- Community payback order with supervision granted on 6.12.13 including 80 hours of Unpaid Work.
- CRASBO granted 14/11/2013 for racial hate crime, with specific conditions that Mr X is prohibited from being in possession of alcohol or under the influence of alcohol in any public place within the county of Midlothian.

Result

Since ASBO was granted Mr X has committed no further offences. One noise complaint was received to his address on 10/01/14 with no further ASB complaints received by Council Community Safety, Housing, Police or Environmental noise team since that date. Mr X is found to be doing well with his unpaid work and there are no current concerns from Criminal Justice Social Work in regard to future offending behaviour.

