

KENT & MEDWAY COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIPS



ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY & MINIMUM STANDARDS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

OCTOBER 2012

TACKLING
ANTI-SOCIAL
BEHAVIOUR
AND ITS CAUSES

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Foreword

As Chairs of the Kent & Medway Community Safety Partnerships we are pleased to endorse the first County wide Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy. Tackling anti-social behaviour and its underlying causes is a priority for our Community Safety Partnerships and has been main-streamed in both the Kent & Medway Community Safety Partnership Plans. With the County Council, Medway Unitary and all Districts and Boroughs Councils committed to the strategy, a clear framework has been established to ensure the public know how we intend to work with them and continue to drive down incidents of anti-social behaviour.

Over recent years we have seen reductions in crime resulting in Kent & Medway being one of the safest places in the country to live, work and visit. This is very positive but we cannot become complacent about the task ahead to keep these levels low. We are fully aware of the impact that anti-social behaviour can have on individuals' quality of life and how it can disrupt communities.

Partnership working across Kent & Medway is excellent, and we intend to build on this. We need to ensure communities themselves understand that responding to anti-social behaviour is a collective responsibility and the part they can play in working with partner agencies to ensure anti-social behaviour is tackled not tolerated. By doing so we will help communities to set and maintain their own neighbourhood standards driving down on behaviour which challenges those standards.

This strategy sets out how partners will work together to deal with anti-social behaviour through effective problem solving, the use of early interventions and how we will deliver a proportionate response to anti-social behaviour, in partnership with our communities, using the tools and powers provided by Government. It also details a set of minimum standards that partners have agreed in relation to dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Mike Hill OBE
Chair Kent Community Safety Partnership

Mike O'Brien
Chair Medway Community Safety Partnership

Executive Summary

'Anti-social behaviour' describes a range of everyday nuisance, disorder and crime, from graffiti and noisy neighbours to harassment and street drug dealing. It is sometimes dismissed as trivial, but anti-social behaviour has a huge impact on victims' quality of life, and is of concern to the public when it comes to local crime issues.

Over 3.5 million incidents were reported to police forces in England and Wales last year and we know that many more were reported to other local agencies such as councils and housing associations, or not reported at all.

Reducing anti-social behaviour is a government priority, and it is a priority for the police and other agencies as well, particularly where it is criminal or targeted at vulnerable victims. Unchecked, anti-social behaviour can be linked to increased disorder, low-level crime and fear of crime in a neighbourhood – the so-called 'broken windows' effect.

In recent years, a large amount of collaborative work has taken place across Kent & Medway with the emphasis towards preventative measures. All partners across Kent & Medway have taken time to refocus and look at the wider issues around anti-social behaviour, especially as the national agenda is currently under review with the publication of the White Paper Putting Victims First – More Effective Responses to anti-social behaviour and together with the incoming Police and Crime Commissioner; will bring anti-social behaviour under greater public scrutiny in the future.

We recognise that the policies and procedures for dealing with anti-social behaviour must take into account the diverse needs of our customers. Types of anti-social behaviour can be motivated by discrimination and our aim is to deal with anti-social behaviour at its root causes and to tackle it in a range of preventative ways that try to change people's behaviour. There are a wide range of services that can have an input in to this agenda and the priority now is to ensure that Kent & Medway has a robust strategy for joint working to ensure we achieve real outcomes.

Introduction

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 gives a statutory definition of anti-social behaviour (ASB) 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 the offender’

This definition is wide reaching and encompasses a broad range of behaviour that affects the quality of life of a particular individual, group or community. This brings with it a challenge in terms of responding as ASB means different things to different people.

Three high profile cases nationally (Garry Newlove, Fiona Pilkington/Francesca Hardwick and David Askew) have highlighted the tragic consequences of ASB in extreme cases. Additionally the Government has recently commissioned a national review of the way the police service manages ASB.

The HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) report titled ‘Stop the Rot’ and Professor Innes’s report titled ‘Rethinking the policing of anti-social behaviour’ were published in late 2010. These reports brought together the findings nationally of how individual forces tackle and respond to ASB. Kent & Medway’s performance, as rated by the HMIC, was positive. The findings show that rates of reported ASB are low, that most people perceive occurrences of ASB to be low to moderate, and victim satisfaction rates are in line with the national average. Subsequent national HMIC publications encouraged the police service to review their current practices in how they deal with ASB.

Kent & Medway Partners recognise the need to tackle perceptions relating to the level of ASB within our communities across Kent. As a result, we have set out a strategy to reflect the recommendations in the HMIC reports, and to address the concerns our communities have relating to ASB.

The outcomes of our research in Kent & Medway, together with looking at best practice from a national perspective, have resulted in this refreshed ASB Strategy. It will focus on understanding the ‘social harm’ and adverse impact that ASB can have on individuals, groups and communities. By ensuring our partnership response is able to meet local needs and by acting quickly to disrupt and stop ASB, we can be more effective in reducing the harm to victims.

This strategy is not about rationing the response to ASB. It is about applying an approach based upon the level of ‘harm’ in terms of repeat and vulnerable victims and Hate Crime prioritising attention to where it is most needed, in line with current national thinking.

ASB and Social Harm

Whilst there is no national definition of 'harm', national research on this issue describes a scale of social harm against factors such as risk, personal vulnerability, attitude, perception or experience. In its simplest terms 'harm' can be described as 'bad behaviour' that is having a negative impact upon others.

For repeat and vulnerable victims, the 'harm impact' can be increased and amplified. With these factors in mind, and based upon research into the national context, this strategy focuses on the social harm caused by unacceptable behaviour and outlines ASB as being:

“Behaviour which has caused harm, is causing harm, or is likely to cause harm and has an adverse impact on any individual, community or the environment, affecting a sense of security and wellbeing”

Although the current national definition of ASB does not have 'harm' mentioned in it; any type of bad behaviour will have an element of harm attached to it; this new approach to ASB will assess the level of harm, so that even potentially low-level behaviour, such as littering or playing football can be assessed against a harm matrix.

This strategy does not move away from responding to calls relating to ASB, but instead will bring a new approach, which involves prioritising incidents based on the levels of harm and risk to those affected, rather than selectively attending or categorising incidents.

Community Perceptions of ASB

The Crime Survey for England and Wales for March 2012 shows that 57.8% of residents in Kent and Medway agree that the police and local council are dealing with ASB and crime issues that matter in their local area. Whilst this places Kent below the national average of 61.3% and 32nd nationally out of 42 police force areas in England and Wales, this is an improvement on the March 2011 survey, in which only 50.9% of residents had a positive perception.

It is recognised that perceptions of ASB occurring frequently in a community can have a bigger impact on the security and wellbeing of local people than actual ASB incidents. The new approach to dealing with ASB, as outlined in this strategy, will tackle perceptions so that groups and individuals feel an increased sense of safety in their environment.

ASB National Categories

A national review has led to a revision of the categories of ASB. The proposed categories change the emphasis from recording and responding to incidents, to identifying those vulnerable individuals, communities and environments most at risk and in need of an enhanced response before the problems escalate.

The three new proposed categories are:

1. **Personal**
2. **Nuisance**
3. **Environmental**

This table is directly taken from Home Office guidance and explains what the 3 new categories mean in more detail.

ASB	Descriptor
Personal	<p>ASB identified by the caller, call handler or anyone else perceives as deliberately targeted at an individual or group or having an impact on an individual or group rather than the community at large.</p> <p>It includes incidents that cause concern, stress, disquiet and/or irritation through to incidents, which have a serious adverse impact on people's quality of life. At one extreme of the spectrum it includes minor annoyance; at the other end it could result in risk of harm, deterioration of health and disruption of mental or emotional well being, resulting in an inability to carry out normal day to day activities.</p>
Nuisance	<p>Those incidents where an act, condition, thing or person causes trouble, annoyance, inconvenience, offence or suffering to the local community in general, rather than individual victims.</p> <p>It includes incidents where behaviour goes beyond the conventional bounds of acceptability and interferes with public interests including health, safety and quality of life. Just as individuals will have differing expectations and levels of tolerance so will communities have different ideas about what goes beyond tolerable or acceptable behaviour.</p>
Environmental	<p>This includes incidents where individuals and groups have an impact on their surroundings including natural, built and social environment. This category is about encouraging reasonable behaviour whilst protecting and managing various environments so that people can enjoy their own private spaces as well as shared or public spaces.</p> <p>People's physical settings and surroundings are known to impact positively or negatively on mood and sense of well-being, and a perception that nobody cares about the quality of a particular environment can cause those effected by that environment to feel undervalued or ignored. Public spaces change over time as a result of physical effects caused, for example, by building but the environment can also change as a result of the people using or misusing that space.</p>

Leadership & Governance

What are we going to do?

Kent & Medway partners will champion the importance of dealing with ASB in Kent & Medway through relevant and robust governance forums.

How are we going to do it?

- Kent Police will monitor progress against the ASB Strategy through a governance forum called the ASB Gold Group. This forum will include membership of Divisional Commanders to report on ASB performance on Divisions and Districts and is chaired by ACC Local Policing and Partnerships.
- Kent & Medway Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) will continue to be local performance delivery champions and will ensure that ASB is overseen at a senior level and that supervisory intervention and quality assurance is provided as necessary.
- Neighbourhood Partnership Teams (including PCSOs & KCC & Medway Unitary Community Wardens) will continue to build on local knowledge of trends and hotspots and will provide leadership on the front line, taking ownership of local ASB and providing a visible reassurance.
- The CSPs for Kent & Medway will continue to be the forum to work with partner colleagues to understand ASB and ensure that there continues to be a collective response to addressing local issues.
- The Kent Community Safety Team will continue to focus on ASB as a key county priority supported by the Kent Community Safety Agreement.
- Public engagement and scrutiny of this strategy will be carried out through overview and review arrangements, and through neighbourhood engagement.
- Information Sharing products will be developed and distributed by KCC Community Safety and Kent Police to support local decision making and resource allocation.

Early Intervention and Effective Problem Solving

What are we going to do?

Partners will analyse and understand local ASB problems by building an accurate intelligence picture using the National Intelligence Model, and direct resources to effectively deal with them.

How are we going to do it?

- Kent Police will effectively intervene to address ASB using the new Kent Police-based model, to ensure issues are resolved early with positive outcomes.
- Neighbourhood Policing Teams will continue to provide delivery resource for dealing with ASB.
- All partners will use all relevant tools and powers and encourage creativity in finding solutions at local level.
- Partners will work to identify a suitable case management system for ASB. KCC & Medway Unitary and Kent Police are currently leading on the development of a system that will work effectively for Kent and Medway.
- Partners will commit to build confidence in the community by engaging with residents and partners to work towards locally directed priorities to prevent ASB problems.
- Partners will commit to communicating how problems have been resolved and deal with ASB successfully through a range of communication channels including through neighbourhood contacts.
- Partners will cooperate to prevent situations that cause ASB in the first place.
- Partners will fully engage with initiatives such as “Troubled Families” and other family intervention projects in order to assist where possible incidents of ASB.

Focus on the harm caused by ASB

What are we going to do?

Partners will understand the intensity and impact of social harm caused by ASB, especially to victims who are vulnerable.

How are we going to do it?

- By recognising the adverse impact of ASB on individuals, groups and the community, partners will improve their service by providing a tailored package of support to meet public need.
- Partners understand the damage ASB can cause, and will take account of the victim's perspective in order to better assess the harm caused and encourage those suffering to come forward.
- Partners recognise the importance of tackling perceptions of ASB. The response to addressing perceptions will be to identify and deal with those 'signal crimes or events' that have a higher adverse impact and trigger negative social reactions in the community.
- Partners will work to prioritise victims of ASB using risk identification and assessment as a key part of our response process.
- Partners will develop a clear understanding of what constitutes 'harm' and the different ways it can impact upon just one person, a group of people or a whole community. Harm will be defined in the context of ASB and link into the work being undertaken by colleagues in Kent Police around Protective Services.
- Partners will recognise that this approach to ASB is about challenging and changing behaviour, which is a significant factor in hate crime. Also recognising that some people are more vulnerable to becoming victims of ASB. Partners will ensure that this strategy complements existing approaches to hate crime across partnerships and that victims with protected characteristics are well supported and receive an enhanced level of service.
- Partners will provide follow up contact with victims of ASB to ensure they are informed by the partnership action taken and to ensure they are satisfied with progress.

Working with partners to support local communities

What are we going to do?

All partners will continue to work together, building on local and flexible arrangements to work with our communities.

How are we going to do it?

- By developing strong relationships across partnerships, we will produce joint solutions and share best practise focused on resolving issues of concern to our communities.
- Partners will work to ensure the most appropriate agency responds to reports of ASB ensuring that the public understands which agency is taking the lead role in working to resolve the incident.
- Community Safety Units (CSUs) will continue to be the unitary/district level, multi-agency forums that share information in a timely fashion and jointly address local problems swiftly and effectively.
- Schools across Kent & Medway will continue to be engaged, with the aim of helping young people understand the damaging effects that ASB can cause.
- There will be continued partnership engagement with the multi-agency children and young people early referral system (Common Assessment Framework) to make sure young people who need a service intervention receive the support they require.
- Neighbourhood Policing Teams will engage with the local community at the earliest opportunity to assess and review the impact of ASB upon a community (Community Impact Assessment) via established networks and support organisations.

Working to reduce repeat victims

What are we going to do?

Partners will identify repeat victims so that they receive an appropriate level of service with an effective case management approach.

How are we going to do it?

- Resources will be targeted to ensure the appropriate level of support is provided to protect and safeguard repeat victims from the harm caused by ASB.
- Case Management will be fully developed to strengthen the approach to effectively deal with priority victims.

Delivering the Strategy

Partners across Kent & Medway recognise that ‘enablers’ – **people, partnerships, processes and performance** – will be essential in the effective delivery of this strategy.

People – We will develop an understanding across partnerships to ensure that we have sufficient capacity and capability to tackle ASB.

Partners will:

- Seek every opportunity to review and maximise resources to tackle problems of ASB. We will allocate the assets and staff best placed to deal with the harm and risks involved when tackling ASB.
- Constantly review the mix and skills of our staff in order to ensure that we have the required capability to deliver the strategy.

Partnerships – by working in partnership at all levels we will:

- Share appropriate data using joint tasking and co-ordination arrangements, building upon current data sharing products and case management in order to proactively identify and reduce ASB.
- Jointly intervene to protect the public and Kent & Medway’s communities, particularly the most vulnerable. Working together through Strategic Partnerships, Community Safety Partnerships, Locality Boards and other Neighbourhood Management forums will be fundamental to the success of our approach. Partners also recognise that the influence of other agencies and organisations, such as individual retailers, the licensed trade, the alcohol industry, and the media will contribute significantly to the safety, and feelings of safety, within communities.

Performance – a performance framework is being established to monitor ASB performance at each stage of the reporting and resolution process. This will include satisfaction as a key component.

Processes – partners will review business processes to ensure that they maximise opportunities to impact upon ASB.

Partners will:

- Seek new ways to better manage demand to maximise resources available for deployment and problem-solving.
- Ensure that tasking and co-ordination processes take account of, and respond to, risks presented by ASB within communities.
- Ensure that our crime and incident recording processes accurately reflect the picture of ASB across Kent & Medway.
- Ensure that where appropriate individual agencies take responsibility for delivering solutions

Delivering the Strategy

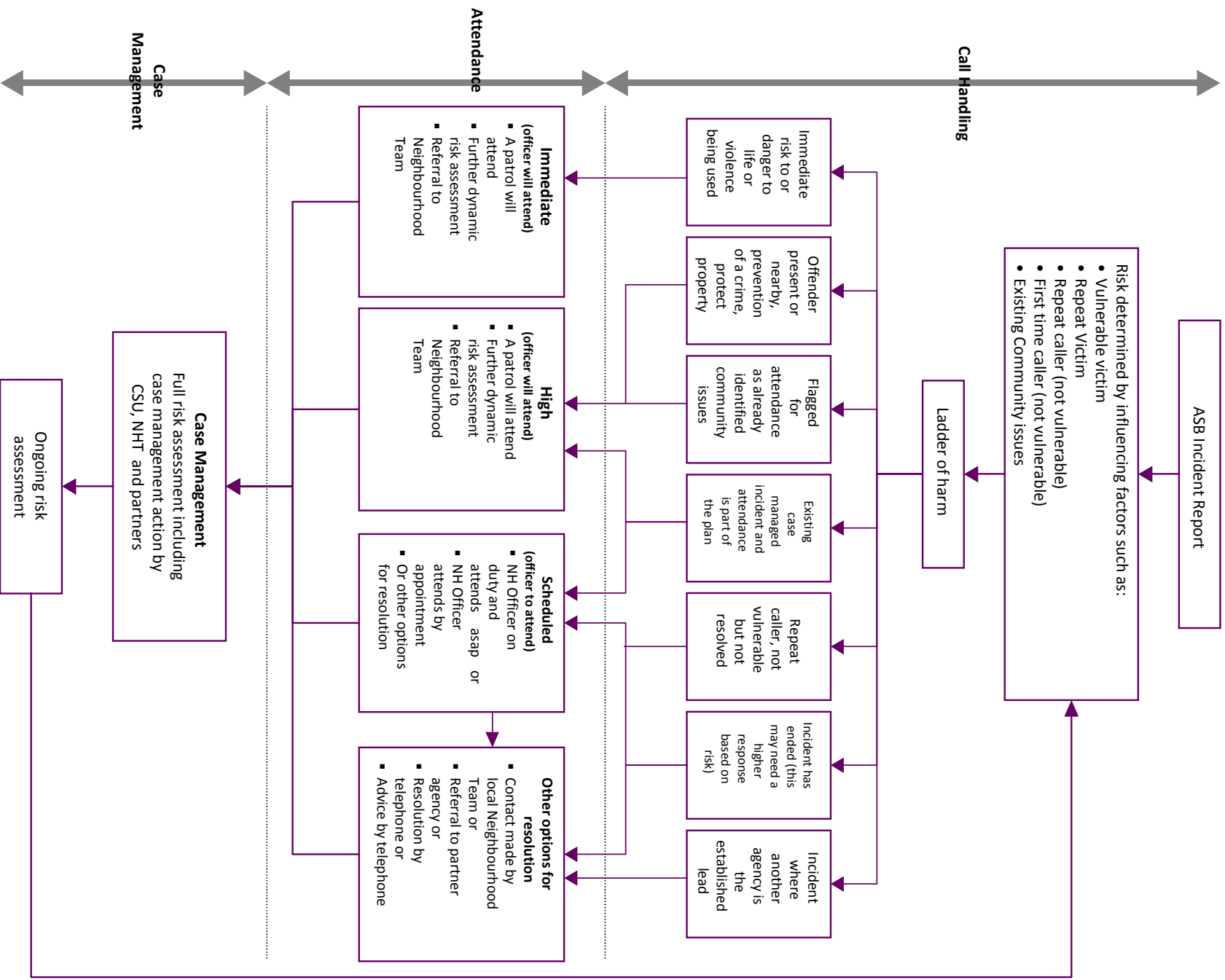
Strategic Groups

The delivery of this strategy will be overseen and coordinated across Kent & Medway by the Kent Community Safety Team (KCST) in conjunction with the Kent Police ASB Gold Group and the Kent Community Safety Partnership (KCSP).

Local Tactical Tasking and Co-ordination Groups

Local groups will continue to ensure that operational performance and interventions remain aligned to local need and will constantly review the threats and risks presented by ASB, ensuring that local resources are aligned to the areas of greatest need in line with NIM (National Intelligence Model) principles. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) strategic assessment process continues to help partners focus on ASB, delivering local actions and results via their partnership action plans. The role of non statutory partners e.g. Housing Associations and private landlords also play a key role in assisting the CSPs to tackle ASB. The benefits of partnership working based on local CSPs with delivery across the wider community safety network are vital to the delivery of this partnership strategy and provide opportunities through shared objectives to address the root causes of ASB.

ASB Incident Reporting & Risk Assessment Matrix



ASB Minimum Service Standards

As part of the work in framing a partnership ASB strategy there are a number of approaches that would assist the delivery of the partnership shared strategy. These include Community Safety Units and a Joint Case Management System. In addition the adoption of a common set of minimum standards which would guide the management of ASB and allow for the necessary localism which enables effective problem solving.

The following are a set of generic standards that provide a commonality of approach without the dilution of local innovation.

- Your complaint will be taken seriously and each complaint will be investigated.
- All information you give us will be treated in confidence and in accordance with data protection legislation.
- You will be informed who the lead organisation will be and you will be provided with appropriate support. The lead organisation will work with partners and other service providers where necessary.
- You will have a single person to contact within the lead organisation dealing with your ASB issue together with contact details.
- We will consider the full range of actions available in order to swiftly and satisfactorily resolve an issue.
- We will support you in collecting evidence to enable positive action to be taken. We will regularly review this information and explain what action is to be taken and why.
- We will keep you informed about your case and provide you with updates within timescales agreed with you.
- We will contact you via telephone, text, email, letter or in person as agreed with you at an appropriate time to suit you.
- We will monitor your satisfaction with the way we have dealt with your case.
- The lead agency will ask the court for special measures for vulnerable or intimidated victims and witnesses where appropriate.
- We will keep communities informed of what is happening within their neighbourhood through a variety of engagement methods.
- When agencies have failed to act to curb an ongoing series of ASB directed towards an individual or individuals, you can complain to the Community Safety Partnership through your district and county elected councillors.
- We are committed to deliver the best service we can for you in partnership. If we are unable to do this we will give a full explanation as to why it was not possible.

The Future

The white paper (published), 'Putting Victims First - more effective responses to anti-social behaviour', sets out the coalition government's plans to deliver on the commitment to introduce more effective measures to tackle ASB.

The white paper also puts these plans in the wider context of reforms to the policing and criminal justice landscape and the work to turn round the lives of the most troubled families. We know what victims of ASB want. First and foremost, they want the behaviour to stop, and the perpetrators to be punished for what they've done. They want the authorities to take their problem seriously, to understand the impact on their lives and to protect them from further harm. They want the issue dealt with swiftly and they don't want it to happen again.

ASB is fundamentally a local problem that looks and feels different in every area and to every victim. From November 2012, directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners will be a powerful new voice for local people, able to push local priorities and it is likely that ASB will be a high priority for the new commissioner.

The government will provide crucial support to local areas by:

- focusing the response of ASB on the needs of victims
- empowering communities to get involved in tackling ASB
- ensuring professionals are able to protect the public quickly
- focusing on long term solutions

Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are an important part of our commitment to promote equality of opportunity for everyone we come into contact with and for our own workforce.

The community we are part of is diverse in many respects, across factors such as age, culture, language, physical and mental capacities, sexual orientation, faith, religion and many others. These differences often mean that the people we come into contact with have diverse needs in relation to the services we provide. All partners need to consider these factors when developing, delivering and reviewing policies, processes and services to ensure we meet the needs of everyone.

The initial scoping of the Equality Impact Assessment has identified that this policy may have a differential impact on the two groups relating to age and disability. This is due to high perceptions amongst the public of ASB being caused by 'youth's hanging around' and disability is a significant factor in increasing the levels of harm caused to victims of ASB.

In line with guidance on conducting Equality Impact Assessments, a programme of consultation is being carried out. This programme will allow the full impact of this policy to be assessed and appropriate measures put in place to monitor and minimise impact. The consultation programme is as follows:

- This partnership ASB Strategy builds upon work already completed by Kent Police in terms of public consultation and engagement with specific groups.
- The strategy highlights the key issues and will be made available on partnership websites.
- Working across partner organisations, use will be made of previously arranged focus groups for adults with learning disabilities and autism. This work will be translated into a strategy designed to be understood by adults with such disabilities.

Glossary of Terms and Key Definitions

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	<p>The statutory definition of anti-social behaviour as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 is: <i>“Acting in a manner that has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the offender”</i></p> <p>Kent Police interpretation of ASB is defined as: <i>“Behaviour which has caused harm, is causing harm or is likely to cause harm and has an adverse impact on any individual, community or the environment, affecting a sense of security and wellbeing”</i>.</p>
ASB Gold Group	A strategic level governance forum within Kent Police to drive and evaluate how the force deals with ASB
BCS	British Crime Survey
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CIA	Community Impact Assessment
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
CSU	Community Safety Unit
EIA	Equality Impact Assessment
Hate Crime	Any hate incident, which constitutes a criminal offence, perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate. Hate crimes can be any classification of offence, not just those designated as racially or religiously aggravated by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
Hate Incident	Any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence, which is perceived by the victim or any other person, as being motivated by prejudice or hate.
Repeat Victim	The same person suffers from more than one criminal offence or incident, whether the same or linked in nature within the previous 12 months
HMIC	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Constabulary
SIAG	Strategic Independent Advisory Group
MSG	Most Similar Groups
NHO	Neighbourhood Officer
NHT	Neighbourhood Team

NIM	National Intelligence Model
NSIR	National Standard of Incident Recording
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
Protected Characteristics	Under the new Equality Act 2010, 'Protected Characteristics' have replaced 'Strands of Diversity' to classify vulnerable groups. The characteristics for service delivery are: Age, Disability, Gender Re-assignment, Marriage and Civil Partnerships, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, or Sexual Orientation.
SMT	Senior Management Team
TTCG	Tactical and Tasking Coordination Group
Vulnerable Person	A person is vulnerable or at risk if, as a result of their situation or circumstances, they are unable to protect themselves from harm.