

Anti Social Behaviour

What we are doing about anti social behaviour in West Berkshire

West Berkshire is a very low crime area, however anti social behaviour is of great concern to residents in both the rural and urban areas of the district.

As a result, the West Berkshire Anti Social Behaviour Panel was set up approximately two years ago and an Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator was appointed last year. All cases requiring a multi agency response are referred to the panel, which meets every 6 weeks and consists of representatives from the following organisations:-

<i>Police</i>	<i>Children's Services</i>	<i>Youth Service</i>
<i>Youth Offending Team</i>	<i>Community Safety</i>	<i>Housing Associations</i>
<i>Environmental Health</i>	<i>Mediation Service</i>	<i>Education Welfare</i>

The purpose of the Panel is to consider the various cases and then propose a resolution, which may include the following:-

Mediation

Resolve, the West Berkshire Mediation Service, is able to provide a mediation service for neighbour disputes or disputes in a local community. They have also extended their service to include a mechanism for working with young people and their families if there are issues around the young person wanting to leave home or being asked to leave home.

Telephone 01635 524065.

Family Group Conferencing

A Family Group Conferencing Co-ordinator has recently been appointed within West Berkshire Council's Children & Family Service. A Family Group Conference involves getting the extended family together to talk through issues such as problems with a young person truanting from school or problematic behaviour. It is a decision making process, that brings together informal and formal networks to provide support mechanisms and is based around partnership empowerment and collective responsibility.

Community Conferencing

This is a pilot project that will help to resolve community issues and concerns identified by community members such as children, parents, carers, schools, local police, youth workers

etc. Community facilitators will make contact with the community members in circles or conferences that will identify local problems and develop plans and solutions and find sources of support for children, carers and communities. Often these circles will draw in statutory and voluntary partners to assist and identify human and other resources.

Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs)

These are not legally binding but take the form of a contract between the person, who is usually under 18 years old and either a police officer or housing officer. The content of the contract is negotiated between the parties involved and will usually detail certain behaviours that the person has agreed to refrain from and agency support to help them to keep to the contract. An ABC lasts for 6 months and if breached can be used to go towards an ASBO.

Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)

An ASBO is a civil order with criminal sanctions if breached and its purpose is to restrict the movements and behaviour of a person or persons in a certain area. It is issued in a Magistrates Court to people over the age of 12 years and lasts for two years. If breached by a person under the age of 17 years it can lead to a two year Detention & Training Order and if breached by a person over 17 years it can lead to a 5 year prison sentence.

Test Purchases for Age-restricted Products

Trading Standards officers are able to carry out test purchases for age-restricted products such as alcohol, cigarettes, fireworks and imitation guns. **Telephone 01635 519192**

Noise Nuisance

Environmental Health officers are able to carry out noise assessments if there are problems in a neighbourhood with noise nuisance. This can lead to the serving of a Noise Abatement Notice or the removal of such items as hi-fi equipment. **Telephone 01635 519192 during office hours or 01635 42161 for out of hours emergencies.**

Detached Youth Workers

Detached youth workers operate throughout the West Berkshire area, although mainly focussed on the more urban areas of Newbury, Thatcham, Tilehurst and Calcot. They are able to make contact with young people out on the streets that do not wish to attend the more formalised youth club provision. The detached youth workers provide a non threatening, non authoritarian presence enabling young people to air their concerns and provide an opportunity for the workers to discuss the effect of the young people's behaviour on the community.

Neighbourhood Wardens

The Newbury Neighbourhood Warden scheme, which employs four part-time Wardens, has been in operation since 2002. It is part funded from Government funding and match funded by Sovereign Housing who also employ the Wardens. It also includes funding from Newbury Town Council and the West Berkshire Safer Communities Partnership.

Telephone 01635 44387.

There is a real need to expand the scheme to other areas of West Berkshire, particularly in the east of the district and additional funding has been provided by West Berkshire Council for this purpose. Discussions are currently underway in order to identify the areas most in need of Warden schemes and it is envisaged that the expanded scheme will be operational by early 2005.

Used Needles

West Berkshire Council removes used needles and syringes normally within one hour of being contacted, 24 hours a day. **Telephone 01635 519080 during office hours and 01635 42161.**

Abandoned Vehicles

If a vehicle is burnt out or beyond use, the Council will put a 24-hour notice on it and it will be removed within 2-3 days. For vehicles that are in a reasonable state of repair, a registered owner check is carried out and then a letter is sent to owner giving them two weeks' notice to remove the vehicle. In addition a notice is put on the vehicle stating that the Council is taking action, along with a voluntary removal form. This form advises that if the Council is provided with the vehicle's registration document, it will remove the vehicle free of charge. **Telephone 01635 519080**

Streetcare

West Berkshire Council offers a Streetcare service within office hours. Residents may telephone the Streetcare number with information regarding abandoned vehicles, used needles, non functioning streets lights, graffiti, litter and a whole range of other associated issues. **Telephone 01635 519080**

Fixed Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts & Parenting Orders

Discussions are currently taking place with regard to the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, in particular the use of Fixed Penalty Notices, stand alone Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders for truancy and behavioural problems in school. However, no decision has yet been made regarding their usage or how the necessary parenting services will be provided or funded.

Designation Orders re Alcohol Consumption in Public Places

The Criminal Justice & Police Act 2001 allows Local Authorities to adopt powers to designate areas that have known alcohol-related anti-social and nuisance associated with them.

In order to make full use of these powers the necessary steps are being taken to replace the No Drinking Byelaw in Newbury with a Designation Order, which will provide the police with additional powers enabling them to remove sealed and unsealed containers of alcohol.

In addition, the issuing of Designation Orders in other parts of the area, such as Thatcham, Purley, Tilehurst, Calcot and Burghfield is under consideration as statistical evidence to support their usage is available. Consultation with partner organisations and the community on the proposals will be taking place during autumn 2004.

