



Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team (ASBAT)

The Communities Panel work plan identified that they wished to be informed of the following relating to ASB:

- How the Council deals with ASB
- Turnaround times
- How residents can make reports and how they are kept updated.

1. Introduction

The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team (ASBAT) was established in 2003 and as part of the Housing Directorate (pre ALMO). The service now sits within *Single Front Line* under the *Place and Sustainability* umbrella. Due to ASB being high on the Government's agenda at that time, a raft of legislation was introduced to allow for Councils and Social Landlords to address ASB in their communities. Approximately 10 different pieces of legislation were introduced from 1998 and over a 10 year period. The ASBAT has a good record in using all of the 'tools and powers' at its disposal to tackle ASB issues in the Borough and has been recognised for this at a national level and on several occasions.

The Council took the view that a dedicated team was required to develop expertise in the field and to deliver on both the Government's and Council's ASB agenda. At the time of inception, the Team carried a case load of around 50 cases but this peaked earlier this year to 321; there is clearly an appetite from residents for the Council to deal with issues where their daily lives are impacted by ASB issues.

The team deal with "serious" anti-social behaviour and this is defined as "serious acts of violence, harassment, youth nuisance, drug dealing, nuisance neighbours and vandalism".

2. Making a report

Residents have various ways to make reports of ASB to the Council by either visiting the Council's Customer Services Centres, calling the ASB reporting line (Customer Services), approaching their Tenancy Management Officer or the Housing Advice Team if they live in the private sector. Officers will take basic details of the incident and all of these will be passed to the ASBAT. There are around 1500-2000 reports of ASB each year.

Upon receipt of the report, the ASBAT will make contact with the victim/reporter within 24 hours and carry out a far more detailed assessment of the incident. A decision is then made as to who will carry out the investigation. The criterion for allocation is as below;

- I. **High end ASB** will be allocated to the ASBAT and will include: Class A Drugs/Acts or threats of violence/Hate Crime/Gangs/Serious Youth Nuisance/Persistent ASB affecting the wider community.
- II. **Lower end ASB** will be allocated to either the Housing Advice Team (Private Sector) or the Tenancy Management Officer (Public Sector). This will include general neighbour disputes/directed abusive language/internal household noise and other general tenancy management issues, such as disputes over gardens, parking etc.

Should cases escalate; the matter can be referred back to the ASBAT at any time. Cases relating to other Social Housing Providers (e.g. Housing Associations) will be passed to the relevant landlord as they have similar powers to deal with ASB issues affecting their residents. They also have a responsibility to intervene where their residents are being affected.

3. Monitoring of cases.

Once an ASB case is allocated to an Officer for investigation, the following time scales apply **to all cases** as part of the initial investigation process. This is known as Stage1 tasks relating to the investigation. This is a Key Performance Indicator which is monitored each month. The KPI target is that the ASBAT carry out all stage 1 tasks in time for at least 70% of cases.

The following stages (1-6) are applicable to every case which the ASBAT investigates and the time frames for each stage are shown.

4. Stage1 Investigations timeframes

Process	Days
1. Interview Victim	1 day (Violent) 5 Days (Non Violent)
2. Agree Action Plan with Victim	A further 3 days (Violent) or 5 days(Non Violent)
3. Interview Perpetrator	A further 3 Days (Violent) 7 days (Non Violent)
4. Contact Victim to feedback progress	A further 15 days (Violent/Non Violent)
5. ASB Officer reports to Team Leader on progress of case	A further 2 days (Violent /Non Violent)
6. Decision made to continue investigation/Legal Proceedings or Close Case.	A further 1 day (Violent/Non Violent)
	TOTAL DAYS (V)= 25 TOTAL DAYS (NV)= 35

5. Feedback on cases

Residents receive formal feedback in relation to their case at stage 4 of the process as outlined above. Informal feedback is also give to residents at any stage by the ASB Officer during the investigation into their ASB complaint and this will continue should the case continue beyond the stage 1 process. The ASBAT's performance in meeting the 70% of case completed in time are shown as below.

Performance Indicator	12/13 Target	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	YTD
Stage 1 cases completed to timescale (%) (TM0252)	70%	71.4	52.5	66.7	62.5	80.5	66.7	56.7	63	66.4

Generally, the recorded performance has been below target. A review of the ASBAT is currently taking place due to the significant increase in the number of cases being taken on by the team (as shown below). Generally, the Stage 1 actions are being undertaken but not recorded in time for the true level of performance to be recorded. This is being addressed through ensuring that Homes for Haringey only refer cases which meet the remit of the team and carrying out some of the preliminary evidence gathering. As the majority of cases are in relation to Homes for Haringey properties, the Council is seeking additional payments from the HRA to allow for additional resources to increase the team's capacity to deal with ASB cases.

There are a high percentage of cases which continue beyond the stage 1 investigation process, particularly those which require a legal remedy. Cases can continue for many weeks particularly where the perpetrator has specific vulnerabilities and/or where court hearing dates are not readily available. Despite these influencing factors, the ASBAT has managed to complete 67% of cases within 12 weeks.

Remedies may include:

- Warnings
- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts
- ASBO's
- Anti Social Behaviour Injunctions
- Eviction (Public Sector)
- Closure Of Premises
- Crackhouse Closures
- Gang Injunctions

6. Working with partners

The ASB Team work with a wide range of partners to progress cases. This can include the Police, Adult Services, Children's and Young People, Regulatory Services, Drug and Alcohol Action Team, Homes for Haringey, other RSLs or the Mental Health Trust. Many cases require a multi-agency case conference approach which the team will co-ordinate to gather information and determine the best way forward.

In addition, where there are potentially vulnerable victims, there is an ASB Partnership Action Group meeting which is chaired by the Police. This meeting considers those cases

where there are vulnerable victims, where a multi-agency approach is needed and where the lead partners has not been able to make progress and needs assistance.

The ASB Team also respond to requests made by the SNT for dispersal orders. Recently, a dispersal order has been made for Duckett's Common to reduce the amount of anti-social behaviour in the area. These dispersal orders require enforcement by the Police in order to be effective.

7. Increase in ASB caseload

The table below reflects the increase in case numbers the ASBAT has seen since it began operating in 2003/2004 (43 cases) and the most recent data showing a caseload of 321 cases. This is further translated into graph format which visually demonstrates the sharp increases in ASB cases dealt with by the ASBAT particularly since 2009/10.

There is no one easily identifiable reason why caseloads have increased but it may be attributed to the public being more aware they can report ASB issues to the Council and that the Council takes a robust approach in tackling such issues. Amongst the other London Boroughs, Haringey is average for the number of ASB reports made to the Council.

There has been an increase in the number of cases where mental health is a factor of the ASB being perpetrated and this requires a coordinated approach with Mental Health and Social Care services to secure the best outcome for the victims well as the perpetrator, who may have specific vulnerability issues. These types of cases are normally quite complex and can take time to reach a satisfactory outcome.

Table showing increase in ASB cases

	HfH cases	Non HfH Cases	Total cases
2003/4	39	8	47
2004/5	127	16	143
2005/6	159	33	192
2006/7	160	62	222
2007/8	161	48	209
2008/9	156	74	230
2009/10	125	53	178
2010/11	199	103	302
2011/12	249	72	321

Graph showing ASBAT caseloads since 2003/4

