Making a difference

A report on the impact of the CIH Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team
The Chartered Institute of Housing
The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the professional body for people involved in housing and communities. We are a registered charity and not-for-profit organisation. We have a diverse and growing membership of over 22,000 people – both in the public and private sectors – living and working in over 20 countries on five continents across the world. We exist to maximise the contribution that housing professionals make to the wellbeing of communities. Our vision is to be the first point of contact for – and the credible voice of – anyone involved or interested in housing.

Chartered Institute of Housing
Octavia House, Westwood Way, Coventry, CV4 8JP
Tel: 024 7685 1700
Email: customer.services@cih.org
Website: www.cih.org

Author: Melanie Rees, ASB Advisor, CIH

The ASB Action Team would like to thank all those respondents who took part in the survey.

Whilst all reasonable care and attention has been taken in compiling this publication, the authors and the publishers regret that they cannot assume responsibility for any error or omission that it contains.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior permission of the publishers.

© Copyright: Chartered Institute of Housing March 2012
Registered charity No. 244067/R

Cover photograph from istockphoto.com
Contents

Introduction 4

What did we aim to do? 5

How was it for you? 9

What we have found – sharing our learning 11

Anti-social behaviour – the changing landscape 13

Helpful information and resources 15
Introduction

Recognising that preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour effectively poses a challenge for many social landlords, in April 2010 CIH established an Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team with the support of grant funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The team was so successful in its work that DCLG agreed to fund the project for a second year with a focus on improving the way that landlords work with their residents and communities to address ASB.

This report summarises the team’s work, the project’s outcomes and shares some of the learning gathered over the past two years.
What did we aim to do?

The project’s aims

Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) and its underlying causes has become a core priority for social landlords and their tenants. This is reflected in the investment and improvements that they, local authorities and their partner agencies have made to provide comprehensive and effective ASB services. Landlords have also played a key part in the success of local community safety partnerships, ensuring that partners and agencies work together effectively, taking a balanced approach to prevention, intervention and enforcement to address ASB within their communities.

However, for many landlords, developing a comprehensive ASB strategy and delivering ASB services that are responsive to both the demands of the local community and partners poses a challenge. Recognising this, CIH created its ASB Action Team in April 2010 supported by funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This funding allowed the team of four advisors to work with landlords free of charge.

The team was set four objectives in its first year.

1. To support the sharing and dissemination of good and innovative practice in tackling ASB among landlords.

2. To work with landlords to improve performance across the sector and build landlords’ confidence to tackle ASB in communities efficiently and effectively with key partners, whilst involving residents to shape local priorities. Raise awareness of value for money principles to support providers to make best use of their resources to tackle ASB.

3. To develop and promote the public profile and reputation of the team, and establish confidence in its work.

4. To influence the national policy and practice agendas through the development and maintenance of respected relationships with national bodies and other key stakeholders in this arena.

CIH was granted a further year’s DCLG funding in 2011/12 to support landlords to improve the way they involve residents in shaping and influencing ASB services and also in preventing and tackling ASB. The agreed outcomes for year two were:

1. Emerging tenant panels and groups have increased capacity to effectively scrutinise the delivery of landlord ASB services.

2. Good and innovative practice amongst landlords and tenants groups to tackle ASB is disseminated and supported.

3. Improved performance and increased mutual confidence amongst landlords and tenants and residents in working collaboratively to tackle ASB.

4. The ASB action team helps to inform and contribute to the national policy and practice agendas on ASB in social housing.
To underpin those key objectives and to make sure that we focused our efforts on the areas in which landlords needed most support, we carried out baseline surveys at the start of years one and two to gauge the level and nature of need. Our year one survey showed that:

- 42% of landlords responding felt that supporting victims and raising public confidence was an area that they needed to improve
- 80% of landlords had not undertaken a cost benefit analysis of their ASB services, and 62% felt that they would benefit from doing so
- 28% felt they could improve on their use of existing tools and powers
- 60% cited a lack of knowledge and understanding of other partners and 40% stated that they felt they were not recognised as key players within their local community safety partnerships
- 63% felt that they would benefit from advice and support to improve the way they identify vulnerability and support witnesses.

In addition, our year two survey showed:

- the majority of landlords responding had a dedicated resident involvement resource
- 80% felt their resident communication strategy was good or excellent, but 20% felt they could improve communication with residents about ASB
- 67% of landlords rated their customer profiling information as good or excellent, but almost a third indicated that their information on customers could be improved. Of those who did capture that information, 22% do not use it to plan or target resources
- 80% rated their approach to resident involvement as good or excellent but most were relying on more traditional methods of engagement and 71% reported that they could improve their communication with young men aged under 18; employed people; single adults; BME communities; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; and young families
- most landlords did not have any mechanisms in place to allow residents to influence how ASB and perpetrators should be dealt with, and almost half did not have a resident panel to scrutinise ASB services. Of those who did have a panel, over half recognised that they needed to involve residents in budget setting.

The work we did

Over the two year life of the project, the team engaged in a wide range of activities including working directly with landlords to improve outcomes for their ASB service users, and raising awareness of and understanding about what effective practice in preventing and managing ASB looks like. The team has also built productive relationships with key bodies and stakeholders which enabled us to shape and influence some important developments in ASB policy and practice.

Improving

Our work with over 280 social landlords of all types across England has been a key focus and a clear success. It includes:

- improvement visits exploring in detail each landlord’s approach to preventing and managing ASB. Depending on the needs of the organisation, advisors focused on:
  - strategic commitment and performance management, including encouraging landlords to sign-up to and adopt the Respect ASB Charter for Housing
- case management
- resident involvement
- supporting victims, witnesses and perpetrators including the use of the Risk Assessment Matrix (Home Office 2010)
- partnership working
- value for money

- developing tailored service improvement plans addressing the areas which each landlord needed to focus on
- follow-up review visits and checks to assess progress and provide further help where needed
- telephone and email support and advice
- supporting landlords to network with each other to share their practices and experiences.

What you told us

“I would highly recommend this service as it looked at our ASB recording/reporting and service in an impartial way without fear of reprimand. Very supportive and helpful.”

“I met with [the advisor] who asked very probing questions about the service we delivered. She then forwarded me a service improvement plan (SIP) which was extremely beneficial to my company. Following a recent organisational re-structure, the new manager has found the SIP beneficial and will include aspects of it in the team work plan.”

Source: January 2012 survey

Learning

Another important feature of the ASB Action Team’s work has been the gathering and sharing of over 250 examples of positive practice in preventing and dealing with ASB. We have shared this learning, along with key sources of guidance, with the overall aim of raising standards of practice through a number of routes including:

- our dedicated ASB Practicehub at www.practicehub.cih.co.uk
- our improvement visits, service improvement plans and other direct contact with landlords
- plenary sessions, workshops, seminars and training events attended by housing and community safety professionals and tenants and residents
- media articles and participation in on-line ‘question and answer’ sessions on ASB
- contributing examples and expertise to publications including CIH’s Practice Brief Respect: delivering the ASB Charter for Housing and How to manage ASB cases effectively.

When, in the aftermath of the August 2011 disturbances, CIH, the National Housing Federation and Inside Housing began work on The Riot Report, the ASB Action Team contributed an array of positive examples of social landlords’ work to build sustainable, resilient communities. This included over 30 examples of positive activities for young people; activities targeting gangs, offenders and potential offenders; successful family intervention projects; and partnership working.
What you told us

“[The advisor] was very helpful, giving advice that was useful for the size of our organisation and good practice examples to help in a practical way. We have brought in a number of improvements as a result.”

“The team really did help – they passed on some good ideas and best practice examples.”

Source: January 2012 survey

Influencing
The past two years has seen a range of improvements and developments in ASB policy and practice and, through our well-developed relationships with key agencies and organisations, the ASB Action Team has played a key part in influencing the form that these have taken. This includes:

• shaping the development of the Effective ASB Case Management Principles (Home Office 2010) and widely promoting these through all our activities
• working with partners to develop a model community harm statement. When used as evidence in legal proceedings, the statement pulls together and summarises all isolated incidents and emphasises the overall harm and impact on the community to a judge. Launched in March 2012, it supports effective case management, partnership working and improves consistency
• feeding back the views, concerns and experiences of landlords to key agencies with a view to shaping and informing their thinking and policy development
• contributing to CIH’s response to government consultation on new tools and powers to tackle ASB and proposals to amend the grounds for possession where ASB has occurred.

What you told us

“The ASB Action squad are excellent ambassadors for housing and represent housing at all levels. Their knowledge is superb and I continually rely on their expertise and guidance to work with housing and to make sure that housing providers are influential and high profile in local decision making and their views and concerns are shared with others... proving that housing must be a main player in future partnership working, at local, regional and national levels.” (A community safety professional who responded to the survey)

Source: January 2012 survey
How was it for you?

At the end of January 2012 we carried out a survey of the organisations we had worked with most closely during the project to find out if and how their services had improved as a result of our work together.

We found that overall satisfaction was very high with:

- 80% telling us that they were ‘very satisfied’ with the service
- 18% that they were ‘satisfied’
- 2% who were ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’.

The table below shows the areas in which those landlords have made changes and/or improvements as a result of working with the ASB Action Team.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes or improvements as a result of working with the CIH ASB Action Team</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved working practices</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revised policies and procedures</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented good practice examples</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved customer satisfaction</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed an ASB strategy</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved the case closure process</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved residents in shaping services</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented or enhanced service standards</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (includes reviewing service to take a harm-centred approach; drawing on in-house resources more; and training staff and tenants as mediators)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided more targeted support for complainants or perpetrators</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved partnership working</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared experiences with other landlords</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implemented or enhanced the IT system</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restructured the ASB service</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed an ASB scrutiny panel</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: January 2012 survey
It is particularly encouraging to see the proportion of landlords which have seen improved customer satisfaction, increased resident involvement and better targeted support having worked with us.

What you told us

“...you brought some great ideas to us, which has improved our service.”

“[The advisor] was super and based on her advice/guidance we restructured how we manage ASB. To date closed case satisfaction surveys indicate satisfaction with how we work with residents suffering ASB is top quartile.”

“Very positive assistance from our regional CIH ASB advisor, where guidance was offered for things that could be improved and encouragement given for work seen as best practice. Also provided much valued time and assistance to a partnership event held by our organisation during the consultation period for the new ASB tools/powers process.”

Source: January 2012 survey
What we have found – sharing our learning

While working with landlords over the past two years we have identified a number of recurring issues, many of which can be easily addressed. In our second year we also saw some inspiring, and easily replicated, examples of tenants and residents influencing ASB services.

Getting the basics right

Paying attention to some basic elements can greatly improve your service users’ experience and perception of your ASB service. This includes:

- assessing the vulnerability of victims, witnesses and alleged perpetrators and the risk of harm at an early stage
- making sure that you have a clear understanding of what is and what isn’t ASB which is understood by all staff and clearly communicated to your tenants and residents
- maintaining regular contact with complainants and witnesses using their preferred method of contact and sticking to the frequency you have agreed with them
- managing service users’ expectations by asking them at the outset what they see as a satisfactory outcome from their complaint
- develop comprehensive action plans for each case which include clear timescales and set out what you expect from the service user and what they can expect from you.

Getting these things right not only provides a better service but also has a direct, positive impact on customer satisfaction levels.

A strategic approach

A well-developed strategic approach to ASB will help you to deliver a responsive, high quality service. This includes:

- having a clear understanding of the nature and causes of ASB in your area
- understanding which tools are most effective in tackling ASB – and why
- focusing on preventing ASB, as early as pre-tenancy stage if you can
- understanding the demographic make-up of your local area as well as the profile of victims and those committing ASB – this will help you to target prevention activity and resources for greater impact
- productive partnership working at operational and strategic levels
- having a strong understanding of the cost, quality and performance of the ASB service – this will help you to demonstrate that the service is providing value for money.

Tenants and residents leading the way

Most social landlords have resources in place to support resident involvement and many offer a range of involvement options. However, resident involvement in ASB services is not always as well-developed as it is in services such as repairs and home improvements.
In our second year we worked with landlords and their tenants to identify the things that were working well so that we could share them with others and to offer advice and support on how tenants and residents can play a greater role in preventing and tackling ASB.

Tenants and residents are influencing ASB services in many ways including:

- completing surveys on their experience of the ASB service
- carrying out mystery shopping or reality checks on services to assess service quality at the first point of contact
- focus groups of people who have used the ASB service
- service improvement or service review groups which focus on ASB
- through Scrutiny Panels which may choose to focus on the ASB service
- supporting each other to report and challenge ASB
- mentoring and supporting victims and witnesses of ASB
- acting as ‘ASB champions’ in local communities
- acting as trained mediators in neighbour disputes
- designing and monitoring good neighbour agreements
- agreeing restorative justice and acceptable behaviour agreements through Community Justice Panels.

The examples below give a flavour of the positive work that tenants and residents are doing on ASB.

**Our tenant and resident involvement showcase**

**Teign Housing’s** Scrutiny Panel carried out a comprehensive review of the ASB service with a range of improvements made including improved customer information and better promotion of mediation.

Preston’s [Community Gateway Association](#) and [Solihull Community Housing](#) have resident panels influencing and shaping the ASB and estate management services.

[Northampton Borough Council](#) has trained a group of tenant auditors to scrutinise its ASB service.

[Bromsgrove and District Housing Trust](#) involved ASB service users in a customer experience journey mapping exercise. As a result, it has improved the way it manages customers’ expectations and now provides guidance on how to complete diary sheets.

[Three Rivers Housing Association](#) has trained groups of tenants to act as mediators.

[whg](#) in Walsall has an ASB victim and witness support group. Members have trialled and given feedback on ‘target hardening’ equipment, mediated in neighbourhood disputes, reviewed policies and procedures, developed a guide so that people know what to expect if they need to attend court, and they support people through court hearings.
Anti-social behaviour – the changing landscape

As the ASB Action Team concludes its work, social landlords are facing a number of challenges. These include:

- getting to grips with the new tools and powers for dealing with ASB
- preparing for the new Police Crime Commissioner arrangements
- maintaining strong, effective partnerships in the face of reduced resources for many of the key players in community safety.

The anticipated changes to possession grounds for cases of ASB will also pose a challenge in terms of emerging judicial interpretation and building relationships with courts.

In our January 2012 survey, we asked organisations what they see as the key challenges they faced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The main challenges ahead for housing organisations</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involving tenants who truly reflect the community</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing excellent ASB services with shrinking budgets</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working in partnership with the newly elected Police Crime Commissioners</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding and implementing the new proposed tools and powers</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivering the Respect ASB Charter for Housing</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing local solutions as a large housing group</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong> (includes shortage of police staff and reduced partnership working with them; continued partnership working; delivering an effective service in isolated rural communities; the impact of funding cuts on floating support services and tenancy sustainment; and reductions in mediation and voluntary services.)</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: January 2012 survey

New CIH ASB service – launching April 2012

Although DCLG funding for the ASB Action Team ends in March 2012, we still want to continue to support housing organisations to deliver excellent services. More than ever, it is essential that we continue to get the basics right while also preparing for the changes that are coming over the next couple of years.

We have used our extensive expertise and knowledge of good practice built up over the last two years to develop a new integrated housing and ASB service. The service will be launched in April 2012 and delivered by members of our established ASB Action Team.
Depending on the outcomes you want to deliver, we can tailor services to suit your specific needs and requirements. For example, we can:

- support service improvement:
  - review or develop an ASB strategy, policy and/or procedure
  - develop effective scrutiny and accountability mechanisms for ASB performance
  - engage tenants and residents in improving the service
  - translate new tools and powers into practice
  - develop a robust case management process
  - review the ASB service and develop and implement service improvement plans
  - evaluate the outcomes and impact of work to tackle and prevent ASB, including value for money
  - prepare for external accreditation
- provide bespoke training packages for staff, residents and partners
- facilitate ASB networks
- manage ASB casework
- advise and support you to manage complex ASB cases.

This list is just a taster of what we can offer. If you would like to know more about this, please contact Debbie Larner at debbie.larner@cih.org or telephone 024 76 851777.
Helpful information and resources

To see all the practice examples gathered by the ASB Action Team and access other useful resources go to -
www.practicehub.cih.co.uk

To find out more about and sign-up to the Respect ASB Charter for Housing go to -
www.cih.org/respectcharter

The Riot Report: How Housing Providers are Building Stronger Communities (February 2012) –
www.insidehousing.co.uk/home/riot-report

CIH Practice Brief Respect: delivering the ASB Charter for Housing (September 2011) – CIH members have free access to this –
www.cih.org/publication/display/vpathDCR//templatedata/cih/publication/data/Respect_Delivering_the_ASB_charter_for_housing

*How to manage ASB cases effectively* (CIH, December 2011) –
www.cih.org/resources/PDF/Policy%20free%20download%20pdfs/How_to_Manage_ASB_cases_effectively.pdf

CIH Housing Practice Issue 16 (August 2011) *Empowering communities to tackle anti-social behaviour* –
www.cih.org/housingpractice

CIH Housing Practice Issue 9 (June 2011) *Anti-social behaviour* – www.cih.org/housingpractice


CIH Practice online: Tackling anti-social behaviour – www.cih.org/practiceonline (CIH members have free access to this resource)

CIH offers a range of training courses on ASB and related topics – www.cih.org/training