

Published Monday 18th November 2024

Making Communities Safer

Results from the 2024 YouGov survey on ASB commissioned by Resolve



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RESOLVE 

Foreword and Recommendations

Having now commissioned seven YouGov surveys looking at anti-social behaviour (ASB) over a period of four years, the message remains clear: We **must** do better when it comes to supporting victims of anti-social behaviour. ASB is not low-level; it devastates the lives of victims and communities and can be a precursor to more serious crime. There were likely over five million incidents of ASB nationwide last year and ASB has forced more than 1 in 7 of us to consider moving home.

There are five key issues that *Resolve* believes should be addressed as a priority.

1) ASB is severely underreported

As highlighted repeatedly in our YouGov data, at least half of victims and witnesses do not report ASB. In response to our most recent YouGov survey, 57% of victims and witnesses said that they did not report the ASB to anybody.

People don't report ASB for a number of reasons, which are examined in this report, but 40% of those who didn't previously report ASB said that they would be more likely to report future ASB if they received

clear communication about how to make a report. Dishearteningly, in the past year, just 7% of people have noticed information about what to do if you are a victim or witness of ASB (although this does represent a slight increase from 2023: 5% and 2022: 5%).

Our research also shows that people don't know their rights as a repeat victim of ASB. The ASB Case Review (formerly the 'Community Trigger') is a crucial lifeline for victims of ongoing, persistent ASB. We are pleased to see a slight increase in the number of people who have heard of the ASB Case Review (2023: 6.5% vs. 2024: 10%), however, just 4% of people fully understand how it works and 83% of people have still never heard of it.

We are calling for a national, long-term and comprehensive communications campaign focused on what to do as a victim / witness of ASB, the rights you have as a victim, and how to access support.

Something as simple as a paragraph on the back of a council tax letter could have a significant impact.

By improving the frequency and quality of our communications, we can help to empower communities,

reduce ASB and increase reporting. More communication around the ASB Case Review could also help to signpost those victims of persistent ASB who are in need of a solution.

2) Significant delays in the Civil Justice system

These delays are well-documented and the impacts have been well-reported on. Last year, the All Party Parliamentary Group on ASB heard evidence from across the board that, speed is essential in addressing ASB.

Firstly, victims of ASB require swift access to both relief and justice to minimise suffering and resolve the issue.

Secondly, failure to address ASB in a swift and decisive manner both emboldens perpetrators and worsens both the ASB itself and the consequences of it, potentially driving victims from their homes. This causes stigmatisation of social housing and prevents it from meeting its core purpose of being a safe and secure place to live.

Thirdly, dealing with ASB takes up time, money, and

other resources that social landlords could use differently. Resolving ASB more quickly and decisively could free up these valuable resources and prevent unnecessary delays in having their cases dealt with.

We repeat calls for a specialist housing court pilot.

Specialist ‘problem solving housing courts’ have the potential to resolve three main issues:

Capacity – It is no longer uncommon for landlords to wait several months to secure a court date.

Efficiency – Evidence from the Residents and Landlords Association (RLA) claims it takes an average of 42 weeks to complete a possession case.

Knowledge – Housing cases can be complex, parties involved may have increased vulnerabilities (such as poor mental health, drug or alcohol dependency) and specialist knowledge is often required.

Tenants and PCCs both support the creation of specialist housing courts if this leads to swifter carriage of justice and greater consistency in decision mak-

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ing. Housing courts must be set up to improve on the current system, and not as a superficial response. A specialist ‘problem solving housing’ court could offer faster redress and relief for victims of ASB and swifter intervention to change the behaviour of perpetrators. Specialist courts also offer the possibility of judges trained with specific knowledge of tenancy and housing related law, able to reach decisions that reflect the complexity of the legal structures and are hence more impactful. It is vital, however, that tenants retain their entitlement to advice and representation via the legal aid scheme.

3. Early action is better

We need more mediation, restorative justice, mentoring, and a focus on community leadership and ownership.

We know that the drivers of ASB are often complex, with adverse childhood experiences, mental health, drug and alcohol misuse needing much more attention.

Many of today’s perpetrators have been victims of traumatic experiences themselves, and so we ought

to adopt a trauma-informed approach and seek to offer help and support to individuals who need it before – or even after – they commit anti-social behaviour.

We are calling for a much greater focus on and funding for early intervention and preventative measures.

This would massively help to prevent anti-social behaviour, crime, and the suffering that comes with it. Engaging with young people in particular presents a prime opportunity to ‘nip anti-social behaviour in the bud’ and to divert young people away from crime. Initiatives such as the Premier League’s ‘Kicks’ and ‘Inspires’ programmes should be fully supported to engage those young people who are harder to reach or excluded from school.

A focus on longer-term challenge and change through civil action and positive requirements, and better funding provisions for those who need it would also make a big difference too.

4. Victims are not guaranteed support

We know that the most harmful and damaging type of ASB is that which is persistent and ongoing.

Being a victim of persistent ASB can be truly consuming, and there are countless case studies highlighting this – some tragically ending in suicide or murder.

That is why we are calling for guaranteed access to support if you are a victim of repeat, ongoing ASB.

There is currently a ‘postcode lottery’ when it comes to support for victims of ASB, with some localities lucky enough to have victim support funded by their PCC. However, we feel strongly that victims of ongoing, persistent ASB should unequivocally be able to access support, no matter where they live in the country. As noted by Baroness Helen Newlove, Victims Commissioner for England and Wales, *“While the Victims and Prisoners Bill in its original form had much to commend it, the consensus was clear: it needed to go further. We required a transformation in how victims are treated in our justice system, not more tinkering around the edges.”*

5. Agencies are unable to access information

Housing providers are well-placed to deal with ASB, and indeed, housing providers often are the main

agency dealing with a particular ASB case. But effectively responding to ASB requires a multi-agency approach, and there are often times when one particular agency (e.g. a housing provider) will need information from another agency (e.g. the police), in order to be able to effectively resolve the case.

In a recent survey of Resolve members, a staggering 96% said they struggle to get the information they need from another agency at least ‘some of the time’, with 46% saying they struggled ‘often’.

Despite existing legislation to facilitate information sharing between Community Safety Partners, (the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) - Section 115), in reality, we know that many agencies are being subjected to extra restrictions and different information sharing protocols.

That’s why we are calling for one single information sharing agreement.

This would be signed off nationally, and **all** agencies in Community Safety Partnerships would be able to rely on this agreement to get the information they need, when they need it, to address ASB.

Headline Statistics



More than 1 in 4 people (28%) say that ASB has made them feel **unsafe** in their area.



15.6% of people have had to consider moving home because of the impact ASB was having on them. **6.3% have actually moved home because of the impact ASB was having on them.**



59.9% of people say that **more needs to be done** to tackle anti-social behaviour.



43% of people say levels of ASB have increased in their local area compared to 3 years ago, **16% of whom say it has increased a lot.**

Scale of the Problem

ASB is not low level and is often the pre-cursor to more serious crime. We know that, in England and Wales, there were 1 million incidents recorded by the police last year¹, but YouGov data shows that only 1 in 4 people who report ASB do so to the police, and a staggering **57% of victims / witnesses don't report ASB to anybody.**

If we were to include the vast number of incidents reported to Local Authorities, Housing Providers and Community Groups (rather than to the Police), and then double it, this offers a more accurate sense of the problem - and it's a big one. Estimates indicate that there are well over 5 million incidents of ASB in the UK every year.

Of course, ASB doesn't just have an impact on victims, its effects are felt by the entire community. 49% of UK adults say that ASB is problematic in their local area, and more than 1 in 10 people (12.2%) say it is very problematic in their area. 43% of people say that

ASB has increased in their local area in the past 3 years, with 16% saying it has increased a lot.

ASB is affecting a huge portion of the population and the collective response should recognise this. 50% have witnessed ASB in the last three years, and almost 1 in 7 people say their friend or family member has been a victim in the same period.

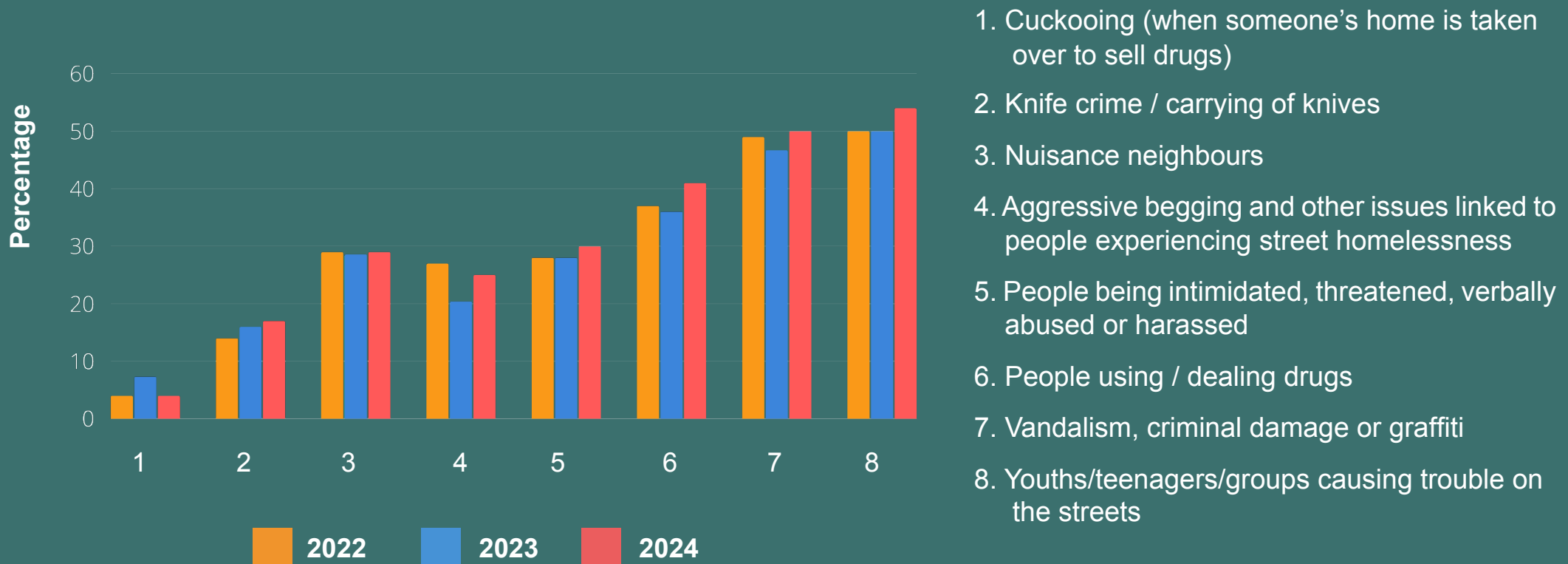
YouGov data also shows that almost 1 in 10 people experience ASB at least once a week (10.9%), with an estimated **1.7 million people experiencing ASB at least once per day, every day** (2.5% of UK adults).



¹ ONS: Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2023

Biggest ASB Issues

We asked, “What, if any, are the biggest issues related to anti-social behaviour in your local area (i.e. the town in which you live)?” We can see that most people perceive youths/groups causing trouble on the streets as the biggest ASB issue in their area - but this doesn’t necessarily mean that it is the most serious ASB happening or the ASB that needs more attention and resources.



Impacts on Victims

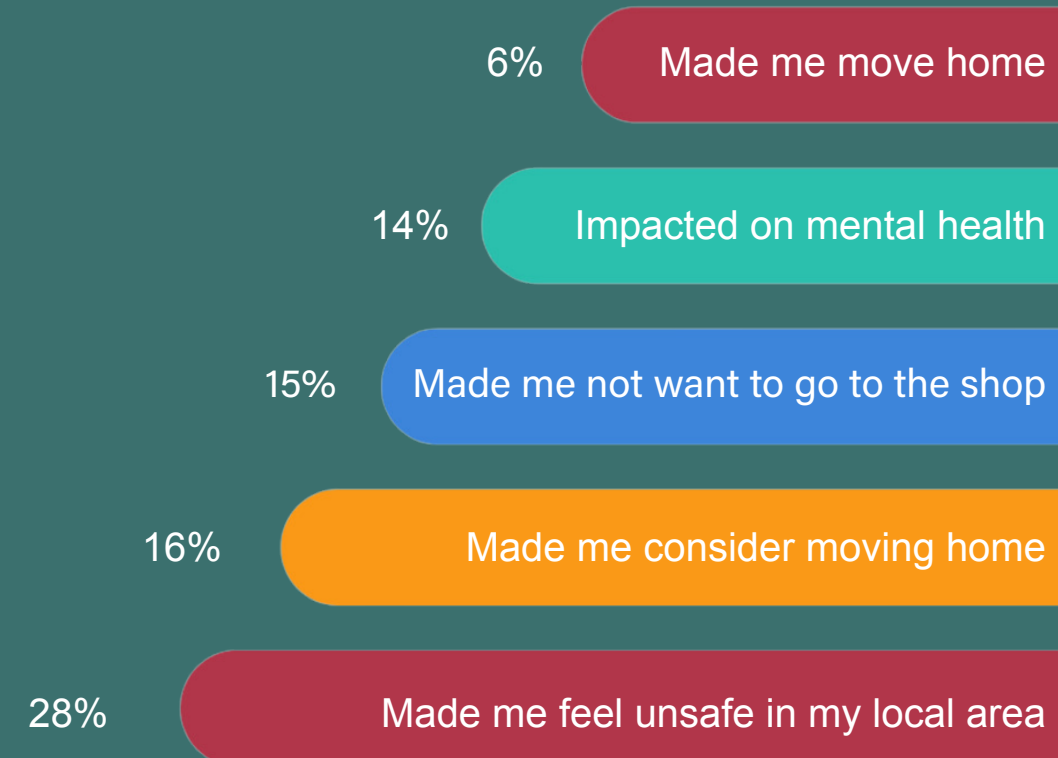
We know that ASB can be devastating for victims and communities; almost 1 in 20 people have had to take time off work because of ASB. The new Victims and Prisoners Bill seeks to protect victims of crime. But, despite the harm that ASB can cause (particularly when it is persistent), victims of ASB are not included in the Bill. As Dame Vera Baird notes,

“An online delivery may be stolen from my front step, and that will have little impact on my well-being. However, as a victim of crime, I would be eligible for support to help me to cope and recover. I would also be eligible for all the rights under the Victims’ Code.

As a victim of ASB, however, I face a different situation entirely. I may have people outside my home, drinking and being rowdy, chucking beer cans into my garden, swearing and spitting. That will make me feel persecuted in my own home, so targeted that I might become afraid of going out and perhaps traumatised, but as a victim of ASB, I have no such victims’ rights and no guarantee of support.”

This is why Resolve continues to push for victims of ASB to be included within the Bill.

“Anti-social behaviour has ...”



Barriers to Reporting

Despite the fact that almost half of people think anti-social behaviour is problematic where they live, and more than 1 in 4 of us say that ASB has caused us to feel unsafe in our local area, a staggering number of victims and witnesses do not report ASB.

Of those who have been victims / witnesses in the last 3 years, 26% made a report to the police, 14% to their local council or social services, 8% to their landlord/housing association, and 8% to a charity or local community group (e.g. neighbourhood watch). However, a massive **57% of people did not report it to anyone.**

So, why are people not reporting anti-social behaviour despite the harm it can cause?

The main reason given (by 50% of those who didn't report) was "I didn't think that anything would be done if a report was made". This could be linked to the second most commonly given answer, "I didn't think that issue was serious enough to report". But it could also represent a more worrying lack of trust in those

who take and respond to reports of ASB. 7% of people said they didn't report the ASB because they had previously made a report and were not happy with the response. If people don't think anything will be done, they won't report it and naturally, nothing will be done.

It's a problematic cycle. Ending this cycle requires people to make the report and then receive a satisfactory response from the responsible agency.

Another disheartening statistic highlights the number of people who don't know how / where to report anti-social behaviour. Of those victims / witnesses who didn't make a report, around 1 in 5 (19%) "didn't know how / who to report the ASB to" and a further 13% "Didn't want to report to the police but didn't know of any alternatives".

There is clearly a lot of work to do here around public education and clearer communications so that people know how to report ASB in their local area and what to expect.

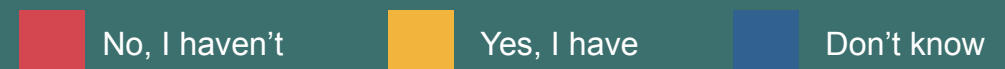
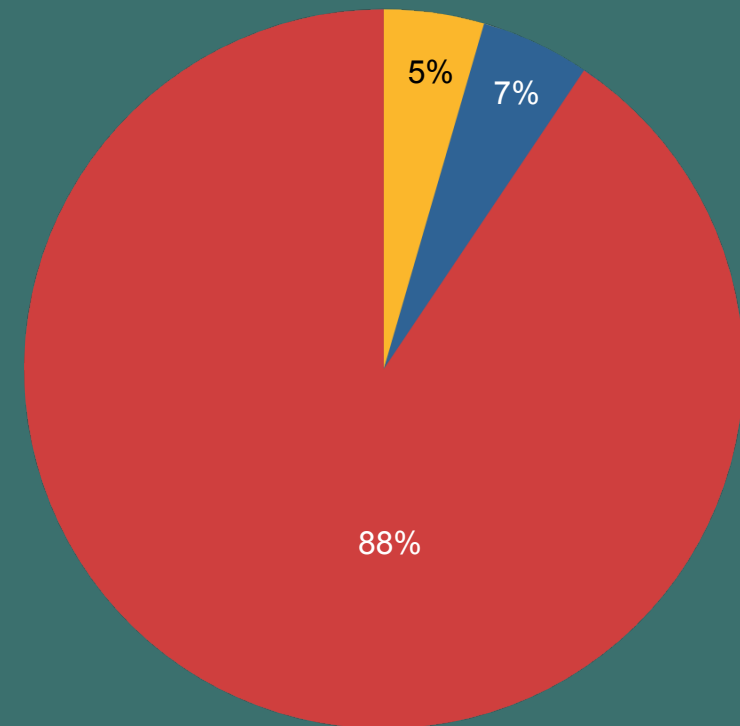
Increasing Reporting

We asked victims / witnesses what would make them more likely to report future incidents of ASB. 39% of people said “a more visible presence of agencies in my area”, which echoes the results from previous surveys (2023: 41% of respondents said a more visible police presence would make them more likely to report. 2022: 43%).

38% of people said they'd be more likely to report future ASB if they received clear communication about to whom and / or how to make a report (2023: 40%, 2022: 32%). 13% of people didn't make a report out of fear of reprisals / repercussions and 39% of people said they would be more likely to report if there was an option for anonymous reporting.

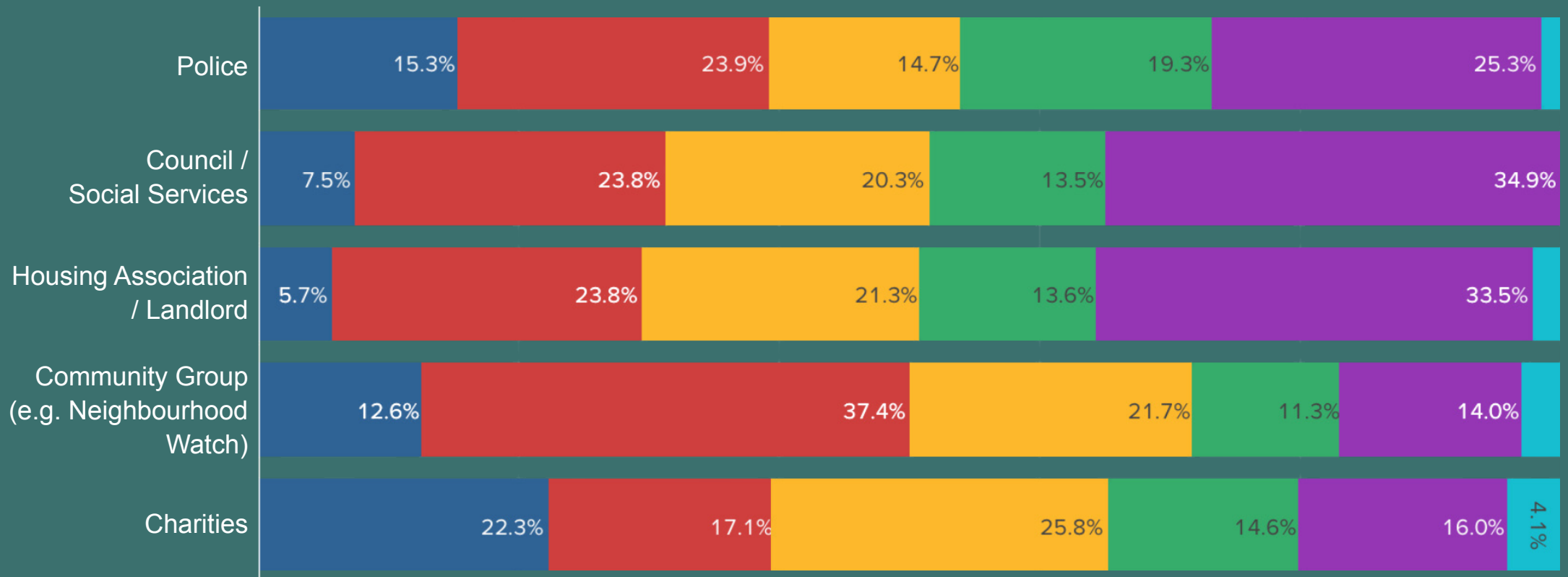
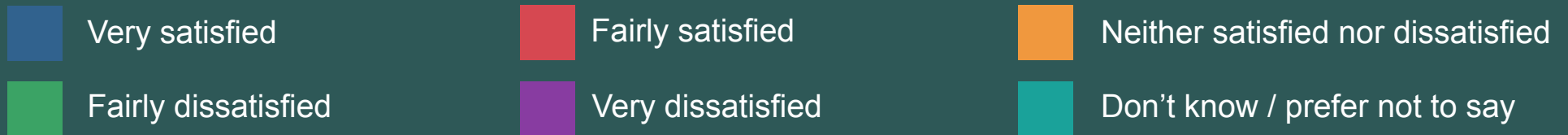
It seems that a lot of progress could be made by improving communications around what to do as a victim / witness. Last year's survey showed that just 5% of people had noticed communications on this topic, and this has only increased very slightly to 7%. (2022: 5%)

“In the last three years (i.e since May 2020)... Have you received or noticed communications about the steps that you could take if you were a victim of or witnessed antisocial behaviour?”



Satisfaction After Reporting

“You previously said that you have reported anti-social behaviour to the following organisations... For the most recent time, to what extent, if at all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way that it was handled?”



The ASB Case Review

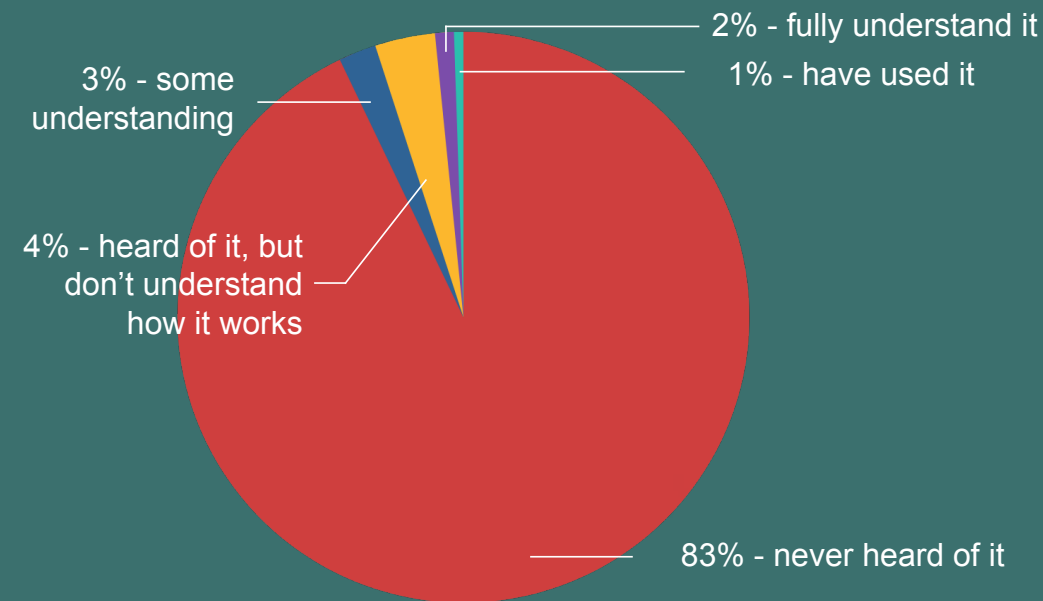


The ASB Case Review is a powerful tool for victims of repeat anti-social behaviour. It gives people the right to request a multi-agency review of their case if they feel their complaints about ASB have not been dealt with. Relevant agencies must come together to produce an action plan for ending the ASB, and victims have a right to be represented at the meeting and to share how the ASB is impacting them.

Sadly, our 2022 YouGov survey revealed that, despite being launched 10 years ago, 94% of people had never heard of the ASB Case Review. This did decrease slightly to 87.5% in 2023, but, as noted in the Victims Commissioners' report published during ASB Awareness Week 2022,

“Awareness of the [Case Review] remains low among the public and even some of the relevant agencies, and it is underused. Where it is used, victims have found they aren't given the opportunity to attend the joint meeting the authorities should organise to tell their story and voice their concerns.”

Resolve have been working hard to increase awareness of this tool and were pleased to support the Home Office with its relaunch last year.



We have seen some further encouraging, albeit moderate signs of improvement this year. Almost 1 in 5 people have now heard of the ASB Case Review, which is certainly not good enough but does represent an improvement from 2022, when only 1 in 17 people had heard of the ASB Case Review.

