

RESOLVE



Making Communities Safer

Understanding anti-social behaviour in the UK: new research commissioned by Resolve

Resolve UK is the UK's leading membership organisation dedicated to tackling ASB and improving community safety. It works with councils, housing associations, police forces, government departments and frontline practitioners to support more effective responses to ASB and help create safer, stronger communities across the country. Resolve provides specialist training, accreditation, consultancy, research and professional development for people working across the community safety and housing sectors. Resolve also develops practical guidance and best practice resources to help organisations improve the way they prevent, investigate and respond to anti-social behaviour. Alongside its professional support work, Resolve plays a major national advocacy role. It leads campaigns including ASB Awareness Week, works closely with policymakers and sector leaders, and regularly publishes research highlighting the experiences of victims and the wider impact of anti-social behaviour on communities.

The West Midlands Housing Association Partnership (WMHAP) is a coalition of 17 social landlords providing ~200,000 homes for 1 million residents across the West Midlands. It works with regional partners to increase affordable housing, regenerate brownfield sites, attract investment and help prevent homelessness. Its members are also accelerating low-carbon homebuilding and improving existing homes through retrofit, solar panels and energy-efficiency measures.

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Foreword

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) continues to have a profound impact on communities across the UK.

Behind every statistic is a person whose quality of life has been damaged - families kept awake at night, residents feeling unsafe in their own homes, businesses struggling with persistent disorder, and victims who too often feel ignored, unsupported or passed between agencies.

This year's YouGov survey (the ninth of its kind) once again highlights the scale of the challenge. It shows that anti-social behaviour is not a marginal issue affecting only a small number of communities. It is a widespread and deeply felt problem impacting millions of people across the country. Just as concerning is the fact that most people still do not report anti-social behaviour at all - often because they don't know how, can't do so anonymously, or think that nothing will be done if they do make a report.

At Resolve, we believe tackling anti-social behaviour should be a national priority once again. That means moving beyond short-term responses and ensuring agencies have the tools, powers and resources needed to prevent harm, support victims and intervene early before issues escalate.

This report sets out six key recommendations that we believe would make a significant difference:

1. **Universal support** for victims of anti-social behaviour
2. Action to address delays in the civil justice system through the creation of a **specialist housing court**
3. One single, national **information sharing agreement** to improve multi-agency working
4. The **removal of barriers to reporting** ASB, including anonymous reports and a standardised approach to reporting
5. Increased **funding for early intervention** and prevention
6. Direct **funding for Community Safety Partnerships**, recognising their understanding of local needs and their ability to deliver local impact

The solutions exist. Across the country, dedicated frontline professionals are already delivering innovative and effective work in extremely challenging circumstances. What is needed now is national leadership, sustained investment and a recognition that anti-social behaviour is not "low-level" crime - it can devastate lives, fracture communities and erode public confidence when left unaddressed.

Policy Recommendations

Universal support for victims

Victims of ASB currently face a postcode lottery when it comes to accessing support, with services, support and outcomes varying significantly depending on where people live. Resolve is calling for **guaranteed universal support for victims of ASB** - including timely advice, advocacy and specialist assistance - so that every victim receives consistent support and protection regardless of their location or local agency capacity.

Specialist housing court

Delays within the civil justice system are leaving victims of ASB waiting months, and in some cases years, for action to be taken.

Resolve is calling for the **introduction of a specialist housing court** to streamline housing and ASB cases, improve consistency in decision-making and ensure that victims, landlords and communities can access faster, more effective justice and resolution.

Information sharing agreement

Too often, vital information about anti-social behaviour is not shared effectively between councils, police forces, housing providers and other agencies, leading to delays, duplication and missed opportunities to protect victims. Resolve is calling for **one single national information sharing agreement** to provide clarity, consistency and confidence for frontline organisations, enabling faster action and better outcomes for communities.

Removal of barriers to reporting

Too many victims of anti-social behaviour still face confusing, inconsistent and inaccessible reporting systems, leading many people not to report incidents at all. Resolve is calling for a **standardised, nationally recognised way to report ASB** - including clearer reporting routes, anonymous reporting options and improved coordination between agencies - to ensure victims can access support quickly, safely and consistently wherever they live.

Early intervention and prevention

Agencies regularly struggle to access early intervention due to availability and a lack of funding. As most victims still don't report ASB, issues are often left to escalate. Resolve is calling for significantly **increased funding for early intervention and prevention**, so local agencies and community safety partnerships can identify risks sooner, support vulnerable individuals earlier and tackle ASB before it becomes more harmful and costly to address.

Funding for CSPs

Community Safety Partnerships are uniquely placed to understand the specific challenges facing their local areas and coordinate effective multi-agency responses to ASB. Resolve is calling for **direct funding for Community Safety Partnerships**, ensuring resources reach local frontline organisations that can deliver earlier intervention, stronger partnership working and more effective long-term outcomes for communities.

Headline Stats



Nearly 1 in 3 people (28%) say ASB has made them feel unsafe in their local area



1 in 5 people (19%) of people experience ASB at least once per fortnight



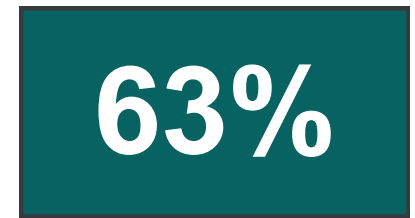
1 in 10 people have witnessed a deliberate fire



More than 1 in 7 people say ASB has caused them to consider moving home. 6% *have* moved home because of ASB.



41% say ASB levels have increased in the past three years. 17% say it has increased a lot.



63% of victims and witnesses who have experienced ASB in the past three years did not report it to anybody

Scale of the Problem

Anti-social behaviour is not “low-level”. It can devastate lives, impact on mental health, fracture communities, and act as a precursor to more serious criminal activity.

In England and Wales, police recorded around one million incidents of ASB in the year ending December 2025, but official statistics capture only part of the true scale of the problem. The Crime Survey for England and Wales found that 39% of people experienced or witnessed ASB in 2025.

Resolve’s 2026 YouGov polling highlights the extent to which ASB remains underreported. Just 24% of victims or witnesses said they reported incidents to the police, while **63% did not report the ASB to anyone at all**. This is an increase from 56% in 2025 and points to a system that many victims do not believe is accessible, effective or worth engaging with.

When incidents reported to local authorities, housing providers and community groups are also considered - alongside the significant level of underreporting identified in this research - the true scale of ASB is likely to be far higher than police-recorded figures suggest. Resolve conservatively estimates that there are **over five million incidents of ASB in the UK each year**.

The impact extends far beyond direct victims. Almost half (49%) of UK adults say anti-social behaviour is a problem in their local area, while **41% believe ASB has increased** over the past three years.

The frequency with which many people experience ASB further underlines the seriousness of the issue. Our latest YouGov survey shows that one in ten people experience ASB at least once a week, one in five experience it at least fortnightly, and around **1.7 million people experience ASB every single day**. These findings demonstrate that for many victims, ASB is not an occasional nuisance but a persistent reality that can have a continuous and damaging impact on daily life, wellbeing and feelings of safety within their community.

More than one in four people say ASB has made them feel unsafe where they live, and **15% say it has caused them to consider moving home**. 6% have actually been forced to move home because of the impact ASB was having on them.

These are not statistics describing isolated nuisance or minor inconvenience. They describe a widespread and persistent form of harm affecting millions of people and communities every year.

Most Prevalent Issues

When asked about the biggest ASB issues in their local area, respondents' answers showed a high level of consistency with previous surveys, suggesting that **the most commonly reported forms of ASB remain persistent concerns** for communities.

Vandalism, criminal damage and graffiti continue to rank among the issues most commonly identified by the public, alongside young people causing trouble on the streets. These visible forms of ASB often shape residents' perceptions of safety and community wellbeing because they are highly noticeable and difficult to ignore - although, the most visible forms of ASB are not necessarily the most serious or the most harmful.

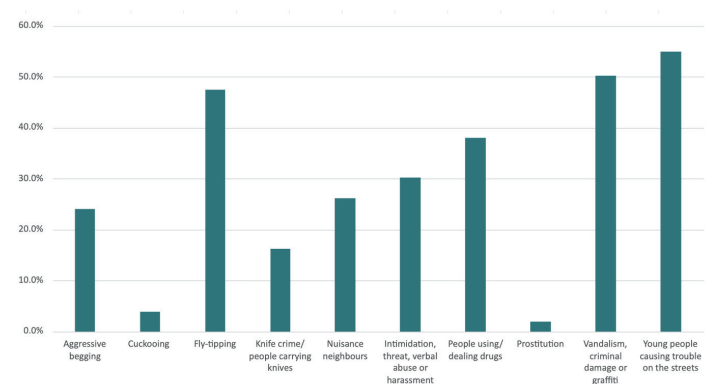
Drug use and drug dealing continue to feature prominently within the findings. In some areas, residents may feel intimidated or unsafe because of open drug use, associated nuisance behaviour and the wider disruption this can create.

Nuisance neighbours remain a persistent and widely reported concern. Compared to more public ASB, neighbour nuisance can be harder to evidence and resolve. For many victims, it is also **inescapable**, making it one of the most damaging forms of ASB in terms of its impact on daily life, wellbeing and mental health.

Effective responses to ASB therefore need to be guided not only by prevalence and visibility, but by risk, vulnerability and harm.

Fly-tipping also continues to be identified as a significant issue. Environmental ASB of this kind can erode community pride and signal to residents that their area is not being cared for or monitored. It can also place additional pressure on local authorities already facing significant resource challenges.

The consistency of these findings over multiple years of surveys demonstrates that **many communities continue to face the same ASB challenges year after year**. Without sustained investment in early intervention and prevention, these behaviours may continue to undermine trust, safety and community cohesion.



Regional Inequalities

Victims' experience of ASB is not evenly distributed across the UK. Our research highlights significant regional variation in how people experience ASB, how safe they feel in their communities and how effectively they believe problems are addressed. For many victims, **postcode continues to play a major role** in determining both the severity of the issue and the quality of support available.

Some regions report substantially higher levels of concern about ASB than others. These differences are likely to reflect a combination of factors including population density, levels of deprivation, local authority capacity, housing pressures and the availability of community safety resources. In areas where services have experienced prolonged funding pressures, the gap between the scale of ASB and the ability of agencies to respond effectively can become particularly pronounced.

Resolve members have consistently reported that regional disparities affect not only enforcement capacity, but also access to victim support, early intervention services and partnership working. In some areas, residents benefit from well-resourced Community Safety Partnerships, dedicated ASB teams and strong multi-agency coordination.

In others, services are more fragmented, reactive and limited by resource constraints. This can create a **postcode lottery** in which victims receive very different levels of support depending on where they live.

The data also suggests that perceptions of safety and community wellbeing are closely linked to confidence in local agencies and visible action being taken to address ASB. Where residents feel that incidents are ignored, unresolved or poorly managed, public confidence can quickly deteriorate. This can contribute to lower reporting levels, increased frustration within communities and a growing sense that anti-social behaviour has become normalised.

No community should experience poorer outcomes simply because of where it is located. Tackling ASB requires a strong national framework combined with effective local delivery, ensuring every area has the resources, partnerships and tools needed to protect victims and respond proactively to issues. While the challenges facing individual communities may vary, victims everywhere should receive the same standard of support, responsiveness and protection. Achieving this requires more **direct funding for Community Safety Partnerships**, improved multi-agency working, and guaranteed, universal victim support.

Supporting Victims

For many victims, the experience of ASB does not end with the incident itself. The quality of the response they receive (whether they feel listened to, supported and taken seriously) can have a major impact on their wellbeing, confidence and willingness to seek help again in the future.

As noted, some areas benefit from strong partnerships and dedicated local services - supporting coordinated responses. In other areas, services face greater pressure and limited capacity, creating a postcode lottery in the quality of victim support offered.

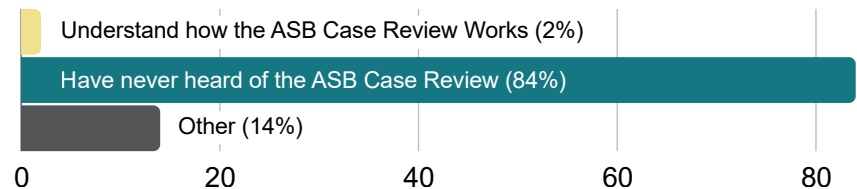
The latest research also highlights wider challenges around victim confidence. **63% of victims and witnesses do not report ASB.** This is up from 56% in 2025. Satisfaction with responses varies considerably between agencies. Among those who do report ASB, dissatisfaction with an agency's response is often linked to poor communication, delays in action and perceptions that incidents are not taken seriously or resolved effectively.

These experiences can have lasting consequences. When victims lose confidence in the system, they are less likely to report future incidents or seek support, contributing to further underreporting and leaving victims feeling increasingly isolated.

Awareness of victim rights and support mechanisms also remains extremely low. The ASB Case Review, one of the most important tools available to victims experiencing persistent ASB, remains largely unknown to the public. **84% of people say they have never heard of the ASB Case Review**, and just 2% of the population say they know what it is and understand how it works.

38% of respondents said they'd be more likely to report ASB if they could do so anonymously, and 39% said they'd be more likely to report ASB if they were given **clear information on how to make a report**. However, just 6% of people recall seeing information about what to do as a victim or witness of ASB in the past three years.

Victims need **clear and accessible reporting routes**, timely support, consistent communication, and increased confidence that agencies are working together effectively.



Specialist Housing Court

Delays within the civil justice system continue to present a major barrier to effectively tackling ASB. For victims experiencing persistent nuisance, harassment or intimidation, **lengthy delays in legal proceedings can prolong harm**, damage confidence in the system and leave communities feeling unprotected.

Resolve members consistently report that delays in obtaining court hearings, injunctions, possession proceedings and other civil remedies can significantly reduce the effectiveness of enforcement action. In some cases, victims have to wait many months - and in more complex cases, even longer - before cases are heard or resolved. During this time, the ASB can continue unchecked, with serious consequences for victims' wellbeing, safety and quality of life.

The impact of these delays extends beyond individual victims. Prolonged legal processes can place additional pressure on housing providers, local authorities, police forces and community safety teams, requiring agencies to devote significant time and resources to managing ongoing cases while waiting for court action. Long delays can also **undermine confidence** among practitioners, victims and communities that effective intervention is possible - contributing to underreporting.

ASB cases are often complex and highly sensitive. They may involve vulnerable victims, neighbour disputes, mental health concerns, repeat victimisation or wider safeguarding issues. Delayed action in these circumstances can increase tensions, allow problems to escalate further and make eventual resolution more difficult for all parties involved.

Resolve continues to support the development and piloting of a **specialist housing court** as a way of improving the speed, consistency and effectiveness of responses to housing-related ASB cases. Such a court could streamline processes, improve judicial expertise in complex ASB and housing matters, reduce delays and ensure cases are handled with greater consistency and understanding of the wider community impact involved.

Tackling ASB effectively requires a justice system that can respond proportionately and **without unnecessary delay**. A specialist housing court could improve outcomes for victims by providing quicker access to legal remedies and clearer, more coordinated case management. Faster and more consistent decision-making would not only benefit victims, but also support earlier intervention, reduce escalation and improve confidence in the wider justice system.

Employment and Experience of ASB

Experiences of ASB can vary depending on employment status. People who are unemployed or otherwise not in work report substantially higher rates of direct experience of ASB than those in full-time employment.

Among respondents working full time, 13% said they had been a victim of ASB within the last three years. This compares with **24% of unemployed respondents** and 21% of those who were not working or selected “other” employment status.

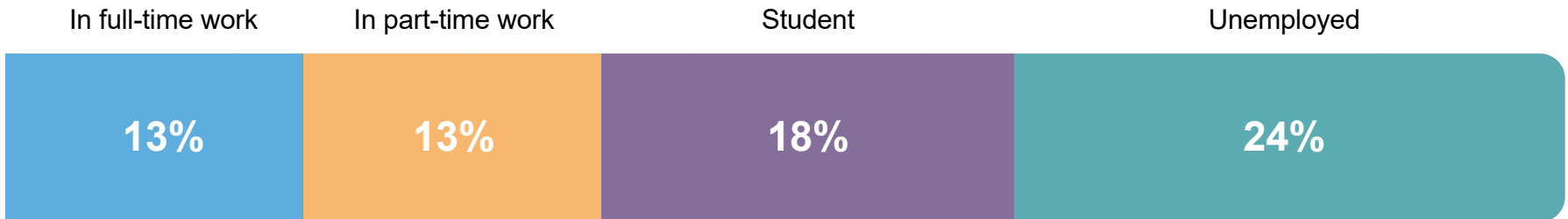
A range of factors may help explain these differences. For example, people experiencing economic hardship may be more likely to live in areas facing higher levels of deprivation, housing

pressures and reduced access to community safety resources. Those who are unemployed or not in work may also spend more time in public spaces or within environments where ASB is more prevalent.

While ASB affects people across all backgrounds and income levels, the findings suggest that some groups may experience disproportionate exposure to ASB.

This reinforces the importance of ensuring that responses are informed not only by enforcement considerations, but also by **wider social and economic inequalities** that can shape people’s lived experiences of community safety.

“I have been a victim ASB in the past three years”



Fire-Related ASB

Fire-related anti-social behaviour is **one of the most dangerous forms of ASB** experienced by communities. Deliberate fire-setting can place lives at risk, cause significant damage to homes, vehicles and public spaces, and create major pressures for fire and rescue services, local authorities, housing providers and police forces.

The latest data suggests that many people have witnessed or experienced forms of fire-related ASB within their local area. The most commonly identified issue was young people deliberately setting fires, cited by 16% of respondents. This was followed by deliberate grassland, woodland or moorland fires (12%), and deliberate fires involving rubbish, bins or wheelie bins (10%). Respondents also reported fire damage to property such as sheds, garages and gardens, and deliberate vehicle fires.

While some of these incidents may be seen as isolated acts of nuisance or seasonal disorder, their consequences can be severe. Deliberate fires can spread rapidly, threaten lives, damage homes and public infrastructure, disrupt local communities and place significant demands on emergency services. Environmental fires can also result in substantial ecological damage and create major costs for public agencies.

Fire-related ASB can be particularly challenging to address because responsibility often sits across multiple organisations. Victims or witnesses may be uncertain whether incidents should be reported to the police, local authority, housing provider or fire and rescue service. As with wider anti-social behaviour reporting, this **lack of clarity may contribute to underreporting** and missed opportunities for early intervention.

Effective responses depend on strong multi-agency coordination and information sharing between local agencies. Where organisations work closely together, patterns of behaviour can be identified earlier and preventative action can be taken before incidents escalate further. This reinforces the importance of stronger partnership working, clearer reporting pathways and effective information sharing arrangements between agencies.

Although fire-related ASB may receive less public attention than some other forms of anti-social behaviour, the survey findings demonstrate that it remains a significant issue affecting communities across the UK. Preventing escalation requires consistent local coordination, targeted prevention work with young people and the ability for agencies to intervene quickly when concerns first emerge.

Early Intervention and Prevention

One of the clearest themes to have emerged from our research over the past five years is the need for **earlier and more preventative responses to anti-social behaviour**. Too often, agencies are forced to respond only after problems have escalated significantly, by which point the impact on victims, communities and public services can already be severe.

The most recent findings demonstrate the scale and persistence of the issue. 41% of people say ASB has increased in their local area in the past three years, while one in ten people report experiencing ASB at least once a week. The data also suggests that millions of people across the UK continue to experience ASB on a regular basis, highlighting the importance of interventions that prevent harm before it becomes entrenched.

Early intervention can take many forms. This may include targeted youth engagement, mental health and family support, mediation, diversionary activities, tenancy sustainment work, environmental improvements, neighbourhood outreach and stronger safeguarding partnerships. In many cases, **relatively small interventions delivered at an early stage can prevent behaviour from escalating** into persistent ASB requiring costly enforcement action or court proceedings later.

Preventative approaches also play an important role in protecting victims. Delays in intervention can allow problems to intensify over time, increasing the emotional, financial and social impact on those affected.

Where agencies are able to identify vulnerability early, share information effectively and coordinate responses proactively, outcomes for both victims and communities are greatly improved.

Delivering effective prevention and early intervention requires **long-term investment**. Many frontline agencies continue to operate under significant resource pressures, limiting their ability to undertake proactive work and forcing services to focus primarily on crisis response. This can create a cycle in which agencies are repeatedly responding to the consequences of ASB rather than addressing underlying causes or emerging risks.

Investment in prevention and early intervention is not only socially beneficial, but economically sensible. Identifying and addressing problems earlier can reduce long-term pressure on policing, housing providers, courts, health services and local authorities, while helping prevent anti-social behaviour from escalating into more serious and costly harm.

Conclusion

These findings present a clear and consistent picture: ASB remains a significant and deeply damaging issue affecting communities across the UK. Millions of people continue to experience ASB in their daily lives, with many reporting that it has made them feel unsafe, impacted their mental health or even caused them to miss work or move home.

The findings also demonstrate that ASB remains stubbornly underreported. A majority of victims and witnesses said they did not report ASB incidents to any agency at all, while awareness of key victim protections such as the ASB Case Review remains extremely low. This suggests that too many people lack confidence that reporting ASB will lead to meaningful action or support, and there is still insufficient information being shared with the public about what to do if you experience ASB.

The survey highlights the complex and varied nature of ASB. From vandalism, nuisance neighbours and street disorder to fire-related ASB and environmental damage, communities continue to face a wide range of serious, persistent challenges. While the forms of anti-social behaviour experienced may differ between areas, the impact on victims and community wellbeing can be severe and long-lasting.

The research also points to ongoing inequalities in how ASB is experienced and addressed. Regional variation, differences in local capacity and inconsistent access to victim support continue to create a postcode lottery for many communities. Victims should not receive different levels of support or protection simply because of where they live.

Despite these challenges, the findings also point towards clear opportunities for improvement. Better reporting systems, stronger victim support, improved information sharing, faster access to justice, greater investment in prevention and stronger local partnership working could all play a major role in improving outcomes for victims and communities.

Effective action requires national leadership combined with strong local delivery, ensuring agencies have the resources, powers and partnerships needed to intervene early, support victims effectively and prevent problems from escalating further. Resolve's six recommendations set out practical and achievable steps towards that goal. Delivering meaningful progress will require sustained commitment from government, local agencies and community safety partners. Without this commitment, millions will continue to experience the harmful effects of ASB in their everyday lives.



www.resolveuk.org.uk
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