

# We hear you – A victim-focused approach to community safety



# Foreword from Rebecca Bryant OBE, Chief Executive of Resolve

One stark message is clear in our latest research – we must do better when it comes to supporting victims of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

ASB can have a devastating impact on communities, and there is an urgent need to tackle issues early before they escalate into more serious forms of criminal behaviour.

But all too often victims of ASB don't know how to make a report, or they assume that they won't be heard or taken seriously.

As you'll see in our report's findings, more than one in ten people in the UK have been a victim of ASB in the last three years. Despite this, more than half of those who were victims of or witnessed ASB did not report the issue to anyone.

When victims and witnesses were asked why they didn't make a report, more than half said they didn't think anything would be done. A similar amount said they didn't think the issue was serious enough to report.

If the situation wasn't already stark enough to prompt action, we are entering a new era in which social landlords will be obligated to collect tenant satisfaction data on their approach to dealing with ASB. Tackling ASB should, quite rightly, be a priority and this regime means there will be nowhere to hide.

Across the country, our members are doing some fantastic work to make communities safer. The sector is modernising, professionalising and there is a clear ambition to drive up standards.

Conversations in recent months, particularly around ASB Awareness Week, have been reassuring.

However, not enough of this work is reaching the communities that we serve. Just one in twenty people said that they had received or noticed communications about ASB in the last three years.

It's clear that we need to get back out into communities and build trust. Collectively we must encourage people to take a stand against anti-social behaviour and ensure that everyone knows that they do not have to tolerate feeling unsafe where they live.

If there is one rallying cry that I hope readers take away from this report, it's that we can and must do better to support victims of ASB. We call on the government, councils, landlords, the police, MPs and communities to commit to following through on our report recommendations, so that everyone in this country can live safely and without fear.



# ASB – the scale of the problem

Official statistics show that ASB accounted for 28% of total police recorded crime in year ending September 2021, with around 1.7 million incidents recorded .

According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales , public perceptions of ASB have shown an increase over the last five years, with 40% of adults aged 16 and over experiencing ASB in their local area in 2019/20, from 27% in 2014/15.

Our own research, carried out with respected pollster YouGov, shows that even these stark findings may understate the true scale of the problem.

For example, our most recent survey found that 14% of the UK's adult population of 52.9 million said they had been the victim of ASB in the past three years.

This would suggest almost 10 million victims in England and Wales, a figure more than five times larger than official figures would suggest.

But of course, ASB doesn't just have an impact on direct victims, its effects are felt by the entire community. Almost half (44%) of UK adults say that it is an ongoing problem in their local area.

More than a third of people (35%) say that ASB has gone up in their neighbourhood in the past three years. Just a handful (5%) feel that it's reduced where they are.

ASB is affecting huge swathes of the population and the collective response should recognise this. A third of adults (32%) have witnessed ASB in the last three years.

But do ASB victims and the general public know what their rights are? Do they know who to reach out to or how to report ASB? And even if they do, do they feel confident in taking those steps? Our new research reveals more.

## Do you think that enough is being done in your local area to tackle ASB?

57%

More needs to be done

23%

Enough is being done

2%

Less needs to be done (i.e. there is too much focus on this in my area)



# Our findings



# Barriers to reporting

More than one in ten British adults (12%) report that ASB has impacted their mental health and an even larger group (14%) have had to make the painful consideration about potentially moving from their home. As we can see, the impacts of ASB are far from insignificant – so why are so few people reporting these crimes?

Dishearteningly, many victims have a perception that ASB is not going to be taken seriously. A staggering 44% did not report because they didn't think the incident was serious enough. Whilst more than half (51%) of ASB victims state that they did not report the incident/s because they 'didn't think anything would be done'.

One fifth (21%) had witnessed ASB but were not the direct victim and did not want to get involved.

There is clearly a significant collective job to be done to build trust and transform attitudes.

**Thinking about your local area today compared to 3 years ago... To what extent has the level of ASB increased or decreased in your local area?**

**23%**

**Net: Increased**

**4%**

**Net: Decreased**

# Community Trigger – lack of awareness

More than one in ten victims (15%) said they did not know how to report ASB or where they would turn to do so.

We specifically asked people in our new research whether they were aware of a key approach – The Community Trigger.

The Community Trigger or ASB Case Review is an approach developed for victims who have reported ASB but are unhappy with the response or lack thereof.

If someone has reported three incidents (or more) within a six-month period, they can contact their local council and activate the Community Trigger.

The aim is to empower victims and give them the right to hold organisations to account in dealing with persistent anti-social behaviour.

Unfortunately, Resolve's research shows that awareness of this option is extremely low, with 94% of people reporting that they had never heard of it.

Only 1% of respondents had ever used it. 2% said that whilst they had heard of it, they did not know how it works.

## Which ONE of the following best applies to you?

I am aware of Community Trigger and have used it	1%
I know what the Community Trigger is and I fully understand how it works	1%
I have heard of the Community Trigger, but I don't know how it works	2%
I have heard of the Community Trigger, and I have some understanding of how it works	2%
I have never heard of the Community Trigger and I have never used it	94%



# Effective communications

There is clearly more to be done when it comes to reaching individuals and neighbourhoods consistently with key information. Victims need to know how they can get support and justice but also that investing the time and emotional energy to engage with these channels will be worthwhile.

When asked if they had received or noticed communications about the steps that they could take if they were a victim of or witnessed anti-social behaviour in the last three years, just 5% of people said yes. A further 8% said that they didn't know, and a staggering 88% said that they had not.

Whether or not communications were sent – the message does not seem to be getting through.

36% of those who have been a victim in relation to ASB said they would be more likely to report incidents if there was clear communication about how to complain and who to.

One in five people also shared that they would be more likely to report a future incident of ASB if they had exposure to success stories where incidents had been resolved (21%).

**You previously stated that you have either been a victim or witnessed ASB in the last three years but did not report it to an official source/body. Which, if any, of the following were the reasons for not reporting ASB?**

Didn't know how/who to report the ASB to	15%
Didn't want to report to the police but didn't know of any alternatives	14%
Didn't think that the issue was serious enough to report	44%
Previously reported anti-social behaviour and was not satisfied with the response	6%
Didn't think that anything would be done if a report was made	51%
Fear of reprisals/repercussions	12%
I was not the direct victim/didn't want to get involved	21%
Other	7%
Don't know/ can't recall	3%
Prefer not to say	1%

# Building trust and confidence

Resolve's research also provides valuable ideas on measures which would build trust and increase individuals' likelihood of reporting ASB.

By far the most influential change would be a more visible police presence in local areas according to 42% of adults.

More than a fifth of people (22%) also stated that a single, standard approach or phone number would increase their likelihood of reporting. This indicates that not enough has been done to communicate options that are currently available including Crimestoppers and 101.

Figures also suggest that there is potentially a 'safety in numbers' tendency as 20% of people said they would be more likely to make a complaint if they knew they weren't doing so alone.

More than a third (34%) suggested that knowing their complaint was anonymous would increase the likelihood of them reporting in future. Whilst 12% of victims said they didn't report due to fear of repercussions.

**You previously stated that you have either been a victim or witnessed ASB in the last three years. If this has happened more than one time, please think about the most recent time... Which, if any, of the following groups did you report this to?**

Police	28%
Council/ social services	14%
Housing association/ landlord	7%
Community group (e.g. neighbourhood watch)	5%
A charity	2%
Other	6%
Don't know	1%
Not applicable - I did not report it to anyone	53%
Prefer not to say	2%



# What must happen now?

## Our Recommendations

Everyone has the right to feel safe in their local area, but our research continues to show that this is not the case for a significant proportion of the population.

# Resolve is calling for:

## Clarity

A clear, sustained and proactive focus from government and regulators on developing strategies to prevent ASB and protect victims. The Home Office should commission a review into the effectiveness of existing ASB measures, and consult with the sector on whether new legislation is required.

## Collaboration

Joined up working between local authorities, housing providers, police and key partners to encourage reporting and build trust with individuals and communities.

Anti-social Behaviour Awareness Week provides a great opportunity for stakeholders to share best practice and to collaborate on new approaches. It is vital that this work continues throughout the year. We would encourage the Home Office to support more opportunities for collaboration between the sector.

## Consistency

Consistency of approach and response no matter where someone is in the country. All parties must sign up to the same set of standards.

Working with Resolve, the Home Office published its Anti-Social Behaviour Principles, aimed at encouraging more people to report anti-social behaviour, improving partnership working between different agencies and protecting victims.

This should act as a starting point, driving further work to put the principles into action.

## Communication

Simple, effective and impactful communications to raise awareness of reporting routes, share successes, and build trust and ensure people know their rights as a victim.

All stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure that the public are aware of where to report ASB and what they can do if they are not satisfied with the outcome. The government should use the Safer Streets Fund to support a campaign to increase awareness of ASB.

## Commitment

To a charter or code for victims of ASB so everyone is confident in where to report and what they can expect.

Resolve is working with partners in highlighting the need for victims to be empowered. Currently, victims of ASB are not included in the provisions of the Victims' Code and are not mentioned in the government's new Victims' Bill. The bill must be fit for purpose.

When reporting routes for victims are clear and simple and when victims know they are taken seriously, this is how we will see transformation.

Being victim-focused is the only way we can achieve our ambition of everyone in this country living safely and without fear.

# Appendix – full survey results

July 2022 YouGov Survey





## Thinking about the past three years, which, if any, of the following statements apply to you?

I have been a victim of anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years	14%
I have witnessed anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years	32%
A family member or a neighbour have been a victim of anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years	12%
I, or a family member/ neighbour have NOT been a victim or witnessed anti-social behaviour in the last 3 years	34%
Don't know/ can't recall	19%
Prefer not to say	3%

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## Thinking about ASB in your local area (i.e. the town in which you live)... Do you think that enough is being done to tackle ASB in your local area?

More needs to be done	57%
Enough is being done	23%
Less needs to be done (i.e. there is too much focus on this in my area)	2%

## How problematic, if at all, is anti-social behaviour currently in your local area (i.e. the town in which you live)?

Very problematic	10%
Fairly problematic	33%
Not very problematic	34%
Not problematic at all	11%
Don't know	12%
<b>Net: Problematic</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Net: Non-problematic</b>	<b>45%</b>

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## Thinking about your local area today compared to 3 years ago...To what extent has the level of ASB increased or decreased in your local area?

Increased a lot	13%
Increased a little	22%
Stayed about the same	38%
Decreased a little	4%
Decreased a lot	1%
Don't know	16%
Not applicable - I did not live in my current local area 3 years ago	7%
<b>Net: Increased</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Net: Decreased</b>	<b>4%</b>

## Which, if any, of the following statements have EVER applied to you?

Anti-social behaviour had an impact on my mental health	12%
Anti-social behaviour has caused me to consider moving home	14%
Anti-social behaviour has caused me to move home	6%
Anti-social behaviour has made me take time off work	3%
Anti-social behaviour has made me feel unsafe in my local area	24%
Anti-social behaviour has made me not want to travel to the local shops	11%
None of these	57%
Prefer not to say	4%

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## How often, if at all, do you experience ASB in your local area?

Every day	3%
At least once a week	10%
At least once a fortnight	6%
At least once a month	9%
At least once every 2 to 3 months	7%
At least once every 4 to 6 months	5%
At least once every 7 to 9 months	2%
At least once every 10 to 11 months	2%
Once a year or less	16%
Never	21%
Don't know	19%



## What, if any, are the biggest issues related to ASB in your local area? (i.e. the town in which you live)

Knife crime/ people carrying knives	14%
Cuckooing (i.e where someone's home is taken over and used to sell drugs)	4%
People using/ dealing drugs	37%
Nuisance neighbours	29%
Vandalism, criminal damage or graffiti (e.g. to buildings, vehicles, bus shelters, phone boxes, trees or plants, etc.)	49%
Youths/teenagers/groups hanging about on the streets	50%
Begging, vagrancy, problems with homeless people	27%
People being intimidated, threatened, verbally abused or harassed	28%
Prostitution	3%
Fly-tipping	43%
Other	7%
Don't know	3%

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## Where, if anywhere, do you feel you are most likely to see ASB?

In or around my home	10%
At my local park or playing area	34%
At or around my local shops	28%
On public transport	23%
In my local town or city centre	54%
At my workplace	4%
In schools	7%
Other	3%
Don't know	10%
Not applicable - I am not likely to see anti-social behaviour anywhere	8%

You previously stated that you have either been a victim or witnessed ASB in the last three years. If this has happened more than one time, please think about the most recent time... Which, if any, of the following groups did you report this to?

Police	28%
Council/ social services	14%
Housing association/ landlord	7%
Community group (e.g. neighbourhood watch)	5%
A charity	2%
Other	6%
Don't know	1%
Not applicable - I did not report it to anyone	53%
Prefer not to say	2%

**You previously said that you reported the ASB to the following organisations the most recent time... To what extent, if at all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way that it was handled?**

<b>POLICE</b>	
Very satisfied	<b>13%</b>
Fairly satisfied	<b>21%</b>
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<b>21%</b>
Fairly dissatisfied	<b>18%</b>
Very dissatisfied	<b>24%</b>
Don't know	<b>2%</b>
<b>COUNCIL/ SOCIAL SERVICES</b>	
Very satisfied	<b>11%</b>
Fairly satisfied	<b>18%</b>
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<b>25%</b>
Fairly dissatisfied	<b>19%</b>
Very dissatisfied	<b>26%</b>
Don't know	<b>1%</b>
<b>HOUSING ASSOCIATION/ LANDLORD</b>	
Very satisfied	<b>9%</b>
Fairly satisfied	<b>19%</b>
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	<b>18%</b>
Fairly dissatisfied	<b>16%</b>
Very dissatisfied	<b>39%</b>
Don't know	<b>-</b>



## Continued

<b>COMMUNITY GROUP (e.g. Neighbourhood Watch)</b>	
Very satisfied	11%
Fairly satisfied	40%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	36%
Fairly dissatisfied	-
Very dissatisfied	13%
Don't know	-
<b>CHARITIES</b>	
Very satisfied	23%
Fairly satisfied	27%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	7%
Fairly dissatisfied	43%
Very dissatisfied	-
Don't know	-

**You previously stated that you have either been a victim or witnessed ASB in the last three years but did not report it to an official source/body one. Which, if any, of the following were the reasons for not reporting ASB?**

Didn't know how/who to report the ASB to	15%
Didn't want to report to the police but didn't know of any alternatives	14%
Didn't think that the issue was serious enough to report	44%
Previously reported anti-social behaviour and was not satisfied with the response	6%
Didn't think that anything would be done if a report was made	51%
Fear of reprisals/repercussions	12%
I was not the direct victim/didn't want to get involved	21%
Other	7%
Don't know/ can't recall	3%
Prefer not to say	1%

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## Which, if any, of the following would make you more likely to report future incidents of ASB?

Clear communication about who and/or how to make a complaint	32%
Single, standard approach/number for reporting ASB	22%
A more visible police presence in my area	43%
Knowing that other people had also made a complaint	18%
Communication about success stories where reported ASB has been dealt with successfully	21%
Having the support of a community group (e.g., neighbourhood Watch)	12%
An option for anonymous reporting	31%
Other	4%
Don't know	14%
Not applicable-nothing would make me more likely to report ASB	12%
Prefer not to say	2%

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## Which ONE of the following best applies to you?

I am aware of Community Trigger and have used it	1%
I know what the Community Trigger is and I fully understand how it works	1%
I have heard of the Community Trigger, but I don't know how it works	2%
I have heard of the Community Trigger, and I have some understanding of how it works	2%
I have never heard of the Community Trigger and I have never used it	94%
<b>Net: Aware</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Net: Not aware</b>	<b>96%</b>

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## In the last three years, have you received, or noticed communications about the steps that you could take if you were a victim of or witnessed ASB?

Yes I have	5%
No I haven't	88%
Don't know / Prefer not to say	8%

## **Methodology**

The surveys referred to were conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov Plc UK panel of 800,000+ individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. Emails are sent to panellists selected at random from the base sample. The e-mail invites them to take part in a survey and provides a generic survey link. Once a panel member clicks on the link they are sent to the survey that they are most required for, according to the sample definition and quotas. (The sample definition could be "GB adult population" or a subset such as "GB adult females"). Invitations to surveys don't expire and respondents can be sent to any available survey. The responding sample is weighted to the profile of the sample definition to provide a representative reporting sample. The profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry accepted data.

### **April survey**

Total sample size was 2006 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 1st - 4th April 2022. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

### **July Survey**

Total sample size was 2001 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 15th - 18th July 2022. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).



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