



Children and Young People's
Centre for Justice

A review of antisocial behaviour in Scotland

An evidence paper commissioned
by the Independent Working Group on
Antisocial Behaviour

February 2025

Collaborating for rights-respecting justice
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A Review of Antisocial Behaviour in Scotland

In grateful memory of Dr Ruby Whitelaw who co-authored this review and evidence paper and sadly passed away in December 2024. She and her insight will be hugely missed.

An evidence paper commissioned by the Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour. Research undertaken by Dr Aaron Brown and Dr Ruby Whitelaw of the Children and Young Person's Centre for Justice (cycj@strath.ac.uk; www.cycj.org.uk).

Introduction and Background

The Scottish Government, in November 2023, announced the creation of an 'Antisocial Behaviour (ASB): Independent Working Group', with the aim of developing a holistic, long-term, strategic approach to improve the lives of communities across Scotland. As a means of addressing existing data gaps relating to ASB in Scotland, work was commissioned and a Qualtrics survey was developed in partnership between the ASB Independent Working Group and the Children and Young People's Centre for Justice (CYCJ). This was designed to assist with producing an agreed definition of ASB and provide a clearer picture of its prevalence, nature, causes, and effects across the country. The survey was distributed by the Scottish Government to key stakeholders, partners and sectors of commerce affected by ASB in Scotland.

This final paper encompasses a review of the ASB literature, along with findings from the survey.

A Review of the Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Literature

Through a review of the existing literature relating to ASB, this section provides context for the survey findings.

Defining ASB

An agreed or consistent definition (or scope) of what constitutes ASB is absent from the literature (Millie, 2009; Vaughan, Dennehy, Kelly & Gabhainn, 2022; Cameron, 2023). Arriving at a singular definition of ASB has been made challenging by its vagueness and subjectivity (Jacobsen, Millie & Hough, 2005; Heap, 2021), meaning that “what may be considered anti-social behaviour to one person can be seen as acceptable behaviour to another” (Home Office, 2004:3). Across England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Ireland, legal definitions of ASB vary:

England and Wales:

“anti-social behaviour” means:

- (a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person,
- (b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises, or conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or
- (c) annoyance to any person. (Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014,1,2)

Northern Ireland:

Acting in a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself.

(The Anti-social Behaviour (Northern Ireland) Order 2004,3)

Ireland:

anti-social behaviour includes either or both of the following, namely

(a) the manufacture, production, preparation, importation, exportation, sale, supply, possession for the purposes of sale or supply, or distribution of a controlled drug (within the meaning of the Misuse of Drugs Acts 1977 to 2007),

(b) any behaviour which causes or is likely to cause any significant or persistent danger, injury, damage, alarm, loss or fear to any person living, working or otherwise lawfully in or in the vicinity of a house provided by a housing authority under the Housing Acts 1966 to 2014 or Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 or a housing estate in which the house is situated and, without prejudice to the foregoing, includes—

- (i) violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, harassment or serious obstruction of any person,
- (ii) behaviour which causes any significant or persistent impairment of a person's use or enjoyment of his or her home, or
- (iii) damage to or defacement by writing or other marks of any property, including a person's home;”

(Criminal Justice Act 2006,2,19,) [1]

[1] An alternative definition in Ireland is contained within the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014.

However, in a Scottish context, ASB is defined in the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004, in the following terms:

For the purposes of this Act (other than Parts 7 and 8), a person (“A”) engages in antisocial behaviour if A -

- (a) acts in a manner that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress; or
- (b) pursues a course of conduct that causes or is likely to cause alarm or distress, to at least one person who is not of the same household as A; and “antisocial behaviour” shall be construed accordingly.

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires - “conduct” includes speech; and a course of conduct must involve conduct on at least two occasions;

(Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004, 13,143)

The above definition contained in the 2004 Act has not always proved straightforward to interpret, with ASB encompassing a wide range of activities (e.g. housing/neighbourhood disputes (individuals or groups), noise nuisance, verbal abuse, threatening behaviour, graffiti/damage, deliberate fire setting, litter, fly tipping, etc).

A Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland (2014) practice briefing, exploring barriers and challenges experienced by social landlords pertaining to ASB, identified ‘agreeing definitions’ as a key challenge. Landlords acknowledged that it could be challenging to identify when the subject of a complaint amounts to ASB, given that it is “... almost impossible to be prescriptive about this as it is often based on individual perceptions and tolerance levels” (Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland, 2014:4). For social landlords, this ambiguity was seen to cause difficulties around managing the expectations of tenants and those living in the surrounding area. A 2023 review into Scotland’s approach to ASB - encompassing 25 engagement discussions, comprising close to 250 individuals - found that although some respondents felt that the definition contained in the 2004 Act allowed “for more individualised local responses”, many others felt it was too “broad and vague” (Scottish Community Safety Network and Scottish Government, 2023:19). Respondents noted that different social groups or geographies can possess diverse interpretations of threshold and definition, the latitude of the definition can make it complex deciding when early intervention should occur, whilst the existing definition may also serve to impede achieving consistency and uniformity at a national level. Proposals (2023:31) put forward during the engagement discussions, that could aid definitional understanding, included:

- Clarity on the scope between crime and non-crime;
- Clarity on the scope of civil and criminal antisocial behaviour;
- Clarity between public and private antisocial behaviour;
- The difference between hate crime and antisocial behaviour explained;
- Production of a simple guidance document for national consistency.

Reflecting a labelling perspective, certain other respondents also believed that the term

'antisocial behaviour' itself could exacerbate the criminalisation of already marginalised communities. In addition, some respondents felt that the legislation in Scotland did not accurately reflect the societal developments to have taken place since 2004 – particularly around the use of digital/social media.

Scotland's ASB Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Since the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004, the national ASB landscape has been framed by a series of developments or milestones (see **Figure 1**).

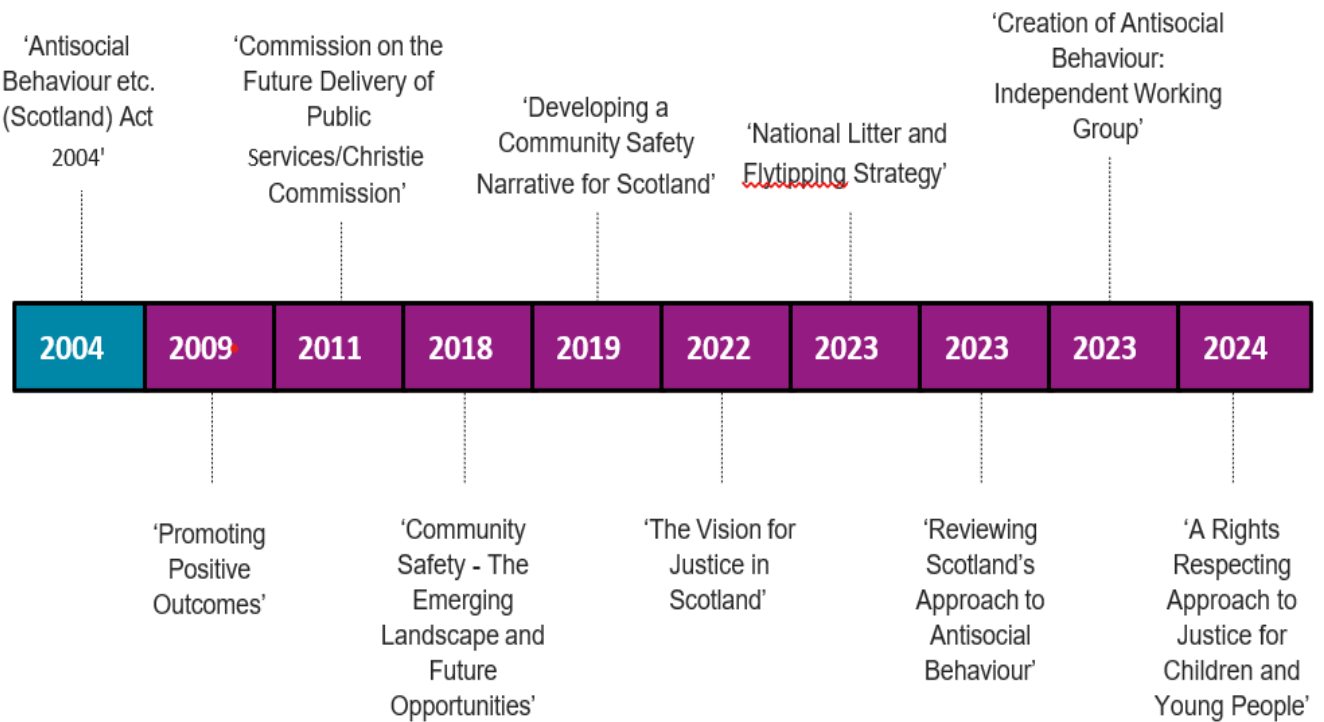


Figure 1: Antisocial behaviour timeline – Scottish milestones

The Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 remains the main ASB legislation in Scotland (see Scottish Executive, 2004). Part 1 of the Act requires that each local authority and the chief constable – acting jointly – produce a strategy for dealing with ASB in the authority's area. The Act expanded the use of Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) in Scotland to children aged 12 to 15 years (part 2) – previously under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 they could only be applied to persons in Scotland aged 16 years and over. It also provided new powers relating to the dispersal of groups (part 3), whereby police now have the power to disperse groups of two or more people or individuals within groups in a designated area (for up to 24 hours). Other provisions contained in the Act included giving the police and courts the power to seal off premises (residential and non-residential) and prohibit all access to them for up to three months (part 4), as well as further additional powers around dealing with noise nuisance (part 5) and the environment (part 6). Provisions around housing – antisocial behaviour notices and the registration of private landlords – were outlined within parts 7 and 8 of the Act. Parts 9, 10, and 11 covered parenting orders, further criminal measures and fixed penalty notices, with Part 12 identifying changes to the Children's Hearings System (CHS).[2]

[2] It should be noted that several other pieces of legislation also have the potential to interact with ASB in Scotland.

The 2009 framework 'Promoting Positive Outcomes: Working Together to Prevent Anti-Social Behaviour in Scotland' marked a move away from "a narrow focus on enforcement action at all costs" towards one geared more towards "prevention and early and effective intervention" (Scottish Government, 2009:2). The framework contained four pillars:

Prevention - Increased focus on positive opportunities regarding education, employment, training, sport, culture and other diversionary activities. Approaches to dealing with ASB should be appropriate, proportionate and timely.

Integration - Emphasis on better information sharing, better sharing of resources and agreed common outcomes.

Engagement - Ensuring effective community engagement and empowering them in addressing ASB in their locale.

Communication - Attempting to counteract negative stereotypes concerning ASB (particularly around young people), whilst building public reassurance, through enhancing understanding of key issues.

The 2011 'Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services' ('Christie Commission'; see also Campbell, 2011) similarly highlighted the need to reprioritise 'prevention' in the delivery of public services, estimating "that as much as 40 per cent of all spending on public services is accounted for by interventions that could have been avoided by prioritising a preventative approach" (Christie et al, 2011: viii).

The Scottish Government, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Scottish Community Safety Network in 2018 produced 'Community Safety – The Emerging Landscape and Future Opportunities' encapsulating discussions with key partners and community safety representatives in local partnerships. From the discussions that took place, participants identified several key principles underpinning a 'national community safety narrative'. These were: person-centred, place-based; addressing the needs of communities holistically; prevention and early intervention; tackling inequalities; strong partnership working with governance and decision-making that enables community participation, influence and ownership; and evidence-based action supported by evaluation and understanding 'what works'. This was followed in 2019 by the publication 'Developing a Community Safety Narrative for Scotland' (Spacey, 2019).

'The Vision for Justice in Scotland' (Scottish Government, 2022a) placed importance on a 'person-centred, and trauma-informed' approach to the delivery of justice services, along with an emphasis on 'prevention and early intervention' (and addressing social inequality). Areas of focus within the vision related to women and children in justice, hearing victims' voices and shifting the balance between the use of custody and justice in the community.

The 'National Litter and Fly tipping Strategy' produced by the Scottish Government (2023a:3) acknowledged the importance of a "shared approach between stakeholders" to

addressing both issues. The strategy incorporated three strategic themes at its core: Behaviour Change (i.e. greater awareness of problems caused by litter and fly tipping, acknowledging one's own responsibilities, and motivation to behave in a responsible manner); Infrastructure and Services (i.e. effective joined up services); and Enforcement (i.e. a strong, consistent enforcement model that is fit for purpose and acts as an effective deterrent).

In 2023, the Scottish Community Safety Network and Scottish Government (2023) published 'Reviewing Scotland's Approach to Antisocial Behaviour'. Two clear recommendations arose from the work undertaken: firstly, that the approach to preventing and tackling ASB needed to be 'long-term', recognising societal change and able to evolve, and possessing coherence with other related national policies; secondly, the creation of an independently chaired group of experts tasked with producing a long-term framework for addressing ASB. Subsequently, the Scottish Government, in November 2023, announced the creation of an 'Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour' to develop a holistic, long-term, strategic approach to improving the lives of communities across Scotland. At an overarching level, the 'National Performance Framework' is Scotland's vision for collective wellbeing. It contains 11 National Outcomes, covering: economy, environment, health, education, communities, children and young people, culture, fair work and business, human rights, international and poverty. Frequently associated with ASB is the National Outcome relating to 'Communities' – "We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe" (however, arguably all the national outcomes possess implications for ASB) – see also, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Prevalence and Perceptions of ASB in Scotland

i. Prevalence of ASB

'Recorded Crime in Scotland 2023-24' (Scottish Government, 2024:47) statistics reveal that Antisocial offences made up just over a quarter (27%) of all offences recorded in Scotland in 2023-24. The number of Antisocial offences police recorded reduced by 57% between 2014-15 and 2023-24. The national rate of recorded Antisocial offences reduced from 92 per 10,000 population in 2022-23 to 88 per 10,000 population in 2023-24. It is important to caveat, however, that there will be instances of ASB which do not meet the criminal threshold to be recorded in such statistics.

'Criminal Proceedings in Scotland, 2021-22' (National Statistics & Scottish Government, 2023a: 25) data shows that 'threatening and abusive behaviour' made up 96% of antisocial offences convictions in 2021-22. Moreover, convictions for antisocial offences altogether grew 33% between 2020-21 and 2021-22 – rising from 7,136 to 9,487. In respect of Anti-Social Behaviour Fixed Penalty Notices (ASBFPNs) [3], 5,301 individuals in 2021-22 received an ASBFPN as a main penalty (with 'breach of the peace' being the main reason for issuing; followed by consuming alcohol in a public place; urinating etc.; refusing to leave licensed premises; vandalism; drunk and incapable) – a 3% rise from 2020-21. Males were given the majority (84%) of ASBFPNs in 2021-22 (National Statistics & Scottish Government, 2023a:47). 2020 - 2022 was during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[3] ASBFPNs allow the police to issue a £50 fine to persons, 16 years or over, for a variety of offences.

A Scottish Government (2022b) report - using data from the 'Growing Up in Scotland' (GUS) study concerning the lives of 14-year-olds in Scotland – asked children how many times they had engaged in any of the following behaviours: hit, kicked or punched someone; been rowdy or rude in a public place; stolen money or other things; taken something from a shop or store; deliberately destroyed or damaged property; written things or sprayed paint on a property; carried a knife or a weapon; used force, threats or a weapon; broken into a locked place to steal something; or none of these behaviours. The analysis found (2022b:49) that 69.2% of children had not engaged in any of the antisocial behaviours. However, the most specified behaviours were: 'hitting, kicking or punching someone' (17.1%); 'being rowdy or rude in public' (14%); and 'stealing money or other things' (10%). The Scottish Housing Regulator (2023:15) also provides further insights into ASB, with a recent report noting that "Anti-social behaviour cases which were resolved increased slightly to 95%".[4]

Evidence around the specific impact made by COVID-19/ the pandemic is still emerging, and as Halford, Dixon and Farrell (2022) have acknowledged 'there is a dearth of research into ASB during the pandemic'; their study does however offer important insights into the relationship between documented ASB and 'police recording practices' during this period.

ii. Perceptions of ASB

The 'Scottish Crime and Justice Survey 2021-22' (National Statistics & Scottish Government, 2023b:13) - encompassing 5,600 face-to-face interviews with adults (aged 16 or over) residing in private households in Scotland - provides data relating to respondents' perceptions of crime and safety. The 2021-22 survey revealed that 76% of respondents believed that the 'local crime rate' had stayed the same or decreased in the two years prior to being interviewed (in 2019/20 it was 73% and in 2008/09 it was 69%). In respect of the 'national crime rate', 52% per cent believed it had stayed the same or decreased (in 2019/20 it was 45% and in 2009/10 it was 40%).

Alongside being questioned about local and national crime rates, participants were also asked (National Statistics & Scottish Government, 2023b:120) how common they thought a variety of crimes and behaviours were in their area – here, a third of adults (32%) thought people acting in an anti-social manner was 'very or fairly common' (only surpassed by 'drug dealing and drug abuse' which was considered 'very or fairly common' by 45% of respondents). In 2021/22 (National Statistics & Scottish Government, 2023b:115) most adults in Scotland said they felt 'very or fairly safe' walking on their own in their local area after dark (76% - up from 66% in 2008/09) and when in their home on their own at night (96% - up from 93% in 2008/09). However, the 2021-22 survey did also determine that:

"Despite general improvements in perceptions of crime and feelings of safety since 2008/09, differences remain in the population. For example, females, disabled people, people living in the 15% most deprived areas, those living in urban areas, and victims of crime were less likely to feel safe, more likely to be worried about specific types of crime, and more likely to think they would experience crime in the coming year." (National Statistics & Scottish Government, 2023b:14).

[4] More detailed Scottish Housing Regulator data can be found at:

Scottish Police Authority and Diffley Partnership (2023) polling into ‘public perceptions of policing in Scotland’ – carried out with adults (16 years plus) from 18th to 23rd July 2023 (2,718 responses) - contained a series of questions relating to ASB. Respondents identified that ‘littering (including fly-tipping) or dog fouling’ was the most observed antisocial activity within neighbourhoods, however, they were most concerned about ‘people using or dealing drugs/ substances’ (see **Table 1**).

Respondents believed that the police were the group most responsible for addressing ASB in Scotland, followed by the local council; individuals; community groups, housing/ residents’ associations; and then businesses. The polling also found that ‘prevention activity’ was most desired by respondents, followed by deterrent activity; diversionary activity; engagement activity; and lastly, enforcement activity.

Table 1: Activities to have ‘occurred’ versus ‘concern’ (adapted from Scottish Police Authority & Diffley Partnership, 2023).

Activity Identified	Rate of prevalence in your neighbourhood in the last 12 months?	Activity most concerned about?
People using or dealing drugs/ substances	45%	41%
Speeding cars or motorcycles, joyriding, car revving	65%	39%
Littering (including fly-tipping) or dog fouling	73%	32%
Vandalism, criminal damage or graffiti	49%	31%
Inconsiderate/obstructive parking	54%	16%

The ‘Scottish Household Survey 2022’ (Scottish Government, 2023b) found that the most common neighbourhood problem reported by respondents in 2022 was ‘rubbish or litter lying around’ (34%; see also Scottish Government, 2023a) – increasing from 31% in 2019. Other percentage increases from 2019 related to: drug misuse or dealing; vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property; neighbour disputes; and groups or individuals intimidating or harassing others (see **Table 2**).

Table 2: Percentage of adults saying a problem is very/fairly common in their neighbourhood by year (adapted from Scottish Government, 2023b)

Problem Identified	2019	2022
Rubbish or litter lying around	31%	34%
Animal nuisance such as noise or dog fouling	32%	31%
Drug misuse or dealing	14%	15%
Rowdy behaviour eg drunkenness, hooliganism or loutish behaviour	11%	11%
Vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property	9%	10%
Noisy neighbours or regular loud parties	11%	10%
Neighbour disputes	6%	7%
Groups or individuals intimidating or harassing others	6%	7%
Abandoned or burnt-out vehicles	2%	2%
Any of the above	52%	52%
None of the above	48%	48%
Base	9780	9640

Concerning neighbourhood safety, the survey found that most people (81%) said they felt ‘very’ or ‘fairly safe’ walking on their own in their neighbourhood after dark - in 2019, it was 83%. Here, men (91%) were more likely to feel ‘very’ or ‘fairly safe’ walking alone after dark, than women (72%).

The ‘Scottish Victimisation Telephone Survey 2020’ (Scottish Government, 2021) encompassed a sample of 2,654 telephone interviews, which were carried out between September and October 2020. It found that 54% of adults thought that crime in their local area had remained about the same since the pandemic outbreak – compared to 23% who believed crime had reduced and 15% who thought it had increased. Moreover, 34% believed that crime had reduced in Scotland since the breakout of Covid-19 – compared to 21% who believed it had increased and 32% who thought it had remained the same. Significantly, however, only 41% of the crimes reported in the survey came to the attention of the police in some manner – suggesting underreporting.

ASB and Victims

Experiencing ASB has been described as ‘living a nightmare’ (former Victims Commissioner for England and Wales, 2019), producing significant negative impacts for victim(s), as well as for wider society (Romeo, Knapp & Scott, 2006).

Demographics, such as age and gender, can be a factor in the level of ASB impact experienced. Mixed methods research carried out by the Home Office (2023) found that those aged 18-34 were at an increased chance of feeling a significant negative impact from ASB. The same research determined that men were more likely to report ASB than women. Levels of deprivation and poverty can also influence victims’ experiences of ASB.

Home Office (2023) research found that individuals situated in the most deprived areas – based on the index of multiple deprivation (IMD) – had a greater chance of having personally experienced or observed ASB in the last 12 months. Furthermore, individuals in these same locations had a greater chance of experiencing a significant impact from ASB on their quality of life, as compared to those who lived in the least deprived areas. In providing context around these findings, stakeholder participants highlighted that individuals may lack the financial resources to move away from the area, whilst local organisations may not have sufficient resources to counteract ASB. It was also suggested in the research that ASB may be underreported in more deprived areas. Relatedly, a study by Bryant (2020:4) – exploring how experiences of alcohol-related ASB are distributed across different socioeconomic groups - determined that: “Lower socioeconomic groups are more likely to experience high frequency alcohol-related ASB; around half of those from the lowest socioeconomic groups who ever experienced this in the last year, experienced it every week or more often.”

Heap (2021) found that most participants in her study sample reported how ASB victimisation had negatively impacted their mental health –feelings of ‘fear’ were emphasised by participants, both in terms of wondering what incidents may happen next, but also, in respect of reporting incidents to authorities (e.g. fearing retribution). Other common feelings identified included those of ‘dread, inevitability, stress and anxiety’ – at times, resulting in the need for medication, therapy and counselling. Similarly, findings by the Home Office (2023) established that those in their study most often felt ‘anger’ and ‘annoyance’ following episodes of ASB – with ‘fear’, ‘loss of confidence’, ‘anxiety’ and ‘depression’ also frequently felt emotions.

Studies (Scottish Community Safety Network & Scottish Government, 2023:13) have also suggested that certain minority groups have “reported that they felt antisocial behaviour and hate crime were closely connected and considered to be a driver for the antisocial behaviour they had experienced.” Reflecting this, Victim Support Scotland (2020), at the beginning of the decade, identified that nearly 98% of ASB complaints, for which they supported individuals, related to hate crime.[5]

Several factors around reporting ASB have been identified (Home Office, 2023) as adversely impacting victims and dissuading them from future reporting. These have included: victim anxiety, relating to potential comebacks from perpetrators (exacerbated when anonymous forms of reporting were unavailable); lack of/ or slow response from authorities to ASB reports - causing victims to feel ‘annoyed’ and ‘hopeless’ and ultimately producing mistrust in said authorities; the commitment required from victims to keep a log of ASB for relevant authorities (e.g. diary/ noise monitoring technology, etc.); and the need to continue to avoid certain areas, due to an ASB report not being successfully resolved.

ASB and the Rights of Children

On 1st September 2020, a Bill was introduced to the Scottish Parliament to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into the law of Scotland, and subsequently, passed in March 2021. In October 2021, a Supreme Court judgement

[5] The Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021 was implemented on 1 April 2024.

identified four sections of the Bill which noted technical matters going beyond the powers of the Scottish Parliament. After considering how to move forward, the Scottish Government brought forward the necessary amendments, leading to the Bill being approved on 7th December 2023 and becoming the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 (which came into force on 16th July 2024). Several UNCRC articles arguably have applicability to the issue of ASB, including:

Article 3.1: In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.

Article 12.1: States “Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child”.

Article 15.1: States “Parties recognise the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly”.

Article 31.1: States “Parties recognise the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts”.

By way of example - The Committee on the Rights of the Child – reflecting Article 15.1 - has repeatedly warned against the use of ‘acoustic devices’ (sometimes referred to as ‘mosquito devices’ or ‘mosquito anti-loitering devices’)[6] in respect of groups of children – including in its latest Concluding Observations (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2023: para 26,b) where it recommended that the State Party: “Strengthen measures to prevent the use of acoustic devices to disperse public gatherings of children (so-called mosquito devices) ...” Within the existing literature, Walsh (2008) and Little (2014) have critiqued the use of mosquito devices, on the grounds that their usage in respect of young people appears to be incompatible with legislation in the United Kingdom, along with its human rights commitments. In a Scottish context, organisations such as the Scottish Youth Parliament and the Children and Young People’s Commissioner Scotland have campaigned against the use of such devices in relation to children and young people. The UN recommendations are generalised for the UK as a whole - the Scottish Government is open to reviewing any significant new evidence of usage but since 2021 has received no further representations from either the Scottish Youth Parliament or the Children and Young People’s Commissioner for Scotland.

In a response to the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Scottish Government (2024b:65) recently made clear that it has “consistently opposed the use of mosquito devices” believing that the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 contains sufficient measures to prevent and deal with ASB. It also confirmed that “as far as we can determine

[6] Mosquito devices emit a high-pitched sound, which is designed to repel young people from a certain

location.

there is little use of these devices in Scotland” – with local authorities, Police Scotland, British Transport Police and ScotRail confirming in 2021 that they are not using them on their sites.

Perceptions of how children and young people engage with public space in their communities (also accounting for a rural context – see Wooff, 2014) has been examined in relation to ASB. As Wood and Hamilton (2023:13; see also Brown, 2013) note: “In the UK teenagers are often marginalised, stereotyped, and seen as a nuisance. They are routinely excluded from public spaces either due to lack of suitable facilities, inability to pay for facilities that are provided, or for low tolerance of their presence from adults” (see also Scottish Community Safety Network & Scottish Government, 2023:45-46).

Deuchar (2010) undertook ethnographic research in three communities in the east end of Glasgow, with the highest indicators of deprivation relating to employment, local income, skills and training; data was collected from 21 young men aged 14-19 years in voluntary youth organisations in each area. A key finding from the study was that most of those interviewed “felt they were exposed to very high levels of intense and unnecessary surveillance in their local communities” (2010:266) – amounting to what they perceived to be ‘harassment’. Here, some of those interviewed felt that being accused of being in a gang was a regular occurrence if they were seen to be associating with others in a group setting.

Brown (2013) carried out ethnographic research in the ‘scheme’ areas of Dundee, accompanying Community Wardens on their walkabouts and carrying out interviews with stakeholders and young people. The findings highlighted the role Wardens played in: building rapport and trust both with young people, and the wider community (allowing them to act as intermediaries and help resolve altercations); addressing environmental degeneration; and creating more activities for young people to take part in.

Neary and Egan’s (2011) research included speaking with 15 children aged 8-16 years about problems in their locale. A key theme to emerge from the findings concerned ‘adult intolerance’, whereby, children felt adults frequently held negative assumptions about them rooted in negative stereotypes. The significance of ‘visual cues’, such as adults avoiding direct eye contact with children; believing that seeing a group of children, means a gang; or children wearing certain types of clothing (e.g. tracksuits), were also deemed to be important in how children and adults perceived and navigated their neighbourhoods.

Davidson (2015) carried out ethnographic research – including interviews with 38 young people aged 12 to 25 years - in a largely social housing area, in the suburbs of a Scottish city. When asked about policing of public spaces, certain young people expressed frustration at being moved on from areas, when ‘engaged in activities they considered social’ – for example, cycling, talking to friends or playing ball games (see Article 31.1). Here, young people felt that they weren’t asked by ASB practitioners why they liked being in a certain area – as opposed to say the park or leisure centre, which professionals often believed was the most suitable location for them (see Article 12.1; see also, Charles,

Hampson, Case & Brown, 2024).

More recent research – such as undertaken by Fraser et al. (2024:23) - has identified the importance of ‘safe spaces’ within communities for young people; yet worryingly, their research found that: “support and ‘safe spaces’ for young people who are facing multiple disadvantages was harder to access and less readily available” (see also Scottish Community Safety Network & Scottish Government, 2023:39). Their research also draws attention to how young people’s behaviour is increasingly shifting into the digital space; this reflects a finding from an earlier report (Scottish Community Safety Network & Scottish Government, 2023:43), where certain respondents felt that social media had become notable in affecting antisocial behaviour, meaning that the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 needs to be updated to meet modern societal challenges.

It should not be overlooked however that although children and young people have often been characterised and perceived as carrying out ASB, studies (Neary & Egan, 2011; Wooff, 2014; Wood & Hamilton, 2023) have shown that children and young people themselves fear and experience ASB in their communities (and at times from other children and young people). Although the issuing of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) to children in Scotland has not been commonplace (Scottish Community Safety Network, 2020), it is necessary to acknowledge that their usage has been subject to a long-term commentary concerning their function (Donoghue, 2010; Squires & Stephen, 2005), along with their potentially criminalising impacts (Hodgkinson & Tilley, 2011). Crawford, Lewis and Traynor (2017) have also highlighted the importance of ‘procedural justice’ when it comes to ASB interventions with young people (e.g. voice, voluntariness, respectful treatment, parsimony, the accuracy of evidence and information, fairness, neutrality). Differences between ASB taking place in urban versus rural settings should also be appreciated; rural policing of ASB can be made challenging by large geographical areas, lack of police resources and rural-specific forms of ASB. Wooff (2015) has suggested that policing in a rural environment is a ‘distinct policing context’, drawing particular attention to the police ‘discretion’ in responding to ASB in such settings, which is ‘informed by community-police interactions’, and whereby, officers rely on their ‘situated community knowledge’ of how such locales function.

Underlying Factors Linked with ASB

Multiple deep-rooted – and intersectional - factors have been explored in relation to ASB (see Scottish Community Safety Network, 2020). Amongst these have been:

Poverty and Deprivation

Statistics reveal that 21% of working-age adults, and 24% of children [7], were living in relative poverty after housing costs in Scotland in 2022-23 (Scottish Government, 2024c). Odgers et al. (2012) longitudinal study – encompassing a sample of 2,232 twins born in England and Wales in 1994-1995 - found “evidence that there is a graded relationship between neighbourhood SES [Socioeconomic Status] and children’s antisocial behaviour that can be observed as early as age 5, was observed across each of the assessment ages and increased across childhood for both boys and girls” (2012:717). A multilevel analysis carried out by Jung (2022), examining neighbourhood effects on anti-social

[7] The Scottish Government has legal targets to reduce child poverty in Scotland – these are that by 2030, less than: 10% of children are in relative poverty; 5% of children are in absolute poverty; 5% of children are in combined low income and material deprivation; 5% of children are in persistent poverty.

behaviour – encompassing a sample of 9,457 young people in England and Wales (aged 14) obtained from the sixth sweep of the Millennium Cohort Study - determined that ‘individual-level factors’, ‘effects of friends and family’, and ‘neighbourhood conditions’ all contribute to ASB, necessitating the importance of an ‘integrated approach’ to addressing the issue. Here, the study’s findings (2022:191) support policies “that aim to reduce antisocial behaviour based on tackling the underlying structural deprivation (such as high unemployment rates and high levels of housing and health deprivation).”

A review (Scottish Community Safety Network & Scottish Government, 2023:10-11) into Scotland’s approach to ASB, revealed that respondents believed that poverty was a key factor underpinning ASB. Here, the importance of an approach that did not work to unduly criminalise individuals for ASB – who may be experiencing the deleterious impacts of poverty in their lives – was highlighted by certain respondents. O’Connell (2023) – utilising data from the Millennium Cohort Study (in which 10,000 17-year-olds were questioned about their taking part in anti-social or risky behaviour) – found that “SES and cognitive ability were very weakly associated with anti-social and risky behaviour, while personality measures were more strongly linked” (2023:9).

Mental Health

Research carried out by London Councils (2014:3) – based on survey responses from London borough heads of community safety – found that “mental health was recognised as an issue in relation to ASB by all respondents and many boroughs reported that it appears to have an increasing impact.” Shelter Cymru (2023:20) conducted research in Wales into the conditions leading to eviction from social housing for ASB and identified that “The key issues of ASB such as noise complaints, littering and overcrowding are all contributory factors in ASB allegations, but the common, unifying factor across all landlords we spoke to was the overriding mental health needs” of those engaged. Scottish Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) data reveals that for the quarter ending December 2023, a total of 83.8% of children and young people were seen within 18 weeks of referral, whilst for adults in respect of psychological therapies, this figure was 80.6% - however, both figures remain below the Scottish Government standard of 90% (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Against this backdrop, feedback from respondents (Scottish Community Safety Network & Scottish Government, 2023:10) engaged in a recent review into Scotland’s approach to ASB not only identified mental health as a root cause of ASB, but crucially, also emphasised the difficulties being caused by cutbacks to support services.

Alcohol and Drugs

Data (Scottish Government, 2022b) taken from the ‘Growing Up in Scotland’ (GUS) study, determined that 54.9% had tried alcohol. When asked at what age they had first drunk alcohol - 77.8% said they were 13 years or older; 3.8% said they were 10 years or younger, whilst 18.3% were aged 11 or 12. In a review (Scottish Community Safety Network & Scottish Government, 2023:10) undertaken into Scotland’s approach to ASB: “Underage drinking was noted by some people as a problem [and] there were also aspects of drinking culture to be taken account of in terms of contributing to antisocial behaviour.”

Flint, Batty and McNeil in their research – which included interviews with 40 individuals in receipt of ASB-related interventions – found that many of their sample had substance misuse problems, whilst Hammerton et al. (2017:863) concludes that “there was evidence for between- and within-person effects of alcohol consumption acting against desistance from ASB.”

Further Factors

Other important factors that require careful consideration in relation to ASB (and justice involvement more broadly) include the negative impact made by school exclusions (McAra & McVie, 2010; Billingham & Gillon, 2024); the influence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (Public Health Wales, 2015); the implications of poor housing quality and conditions (Scottish Government, 2024d); and the consequences of Covid-19 (Scottish Community Safety Network & Scottish Government, 2023).

Preventing ASB

A range of options have traditionally been used in responding to ASB in Scotland, such as: warning letters, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), Interim ASBOs, ASBOs, ASBFPNs, Recorded Police Warnings (RPWs) and dispersal powers.[8] The 2009 framework ‘Promoting Positive Outcomes’ signalled a shift away from a heavy emphasis on enforcement, towards one aimed more towards prevention and early intervention (Scottish Government, 2009). Adoption of a trauma-informed (Scottish Government, 2022a) preventative approach, which holistically, and in a cross-sector way, recognises and addresses the multiple complex factors underlying children, young people and adults’ involvement in ASB seemingly reflects Scotland’s policy trajectory in this area. For prevention activities to be effective, however, they need to be sufficiently resourced – for example, through suitable investment in youth work services budgets (Scottish Youth Parliament, 2024; Scottish Government, 2024e, Scottish Government, 2024f). Types of prevention that it has been suggested may assist in averting ASB include:

Youth Work Provision

Participation in youth work provision has been identified as having beneficial impacts relating to pro-social behaviour (SQW & Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2024). Some examples are:

Glas-glow Up (Scotland)

Following funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, a ‘participatory grant-making approach’ was developed by Youth Scotland (supported by youth workers). The ambition being to provide young people with a chance to pick out and fund projects to address ASB in their local communities. The chosen young people (called Young Grantmakers) were aged 13-25, chosen from four different parts of Glasgow, trained in the grant-making process, and gained accreditation for their involvement.

The Young Grantmakers decided that for a project application to be funded, its proposed initiative needed to meet at least one of five criteria: 1. Provide safe spaces for young people to assemble; 2. Support young people to be outdoors; 3. Reach young people not already engaged with other projects; 4. Engage with other stakeholders in the local

[8] Technology, such as CCTV and body-worn cameras, are also used in relation to ASB. % of children are in persistent poverty.

vicinity. 5. Support young people to improve their local community. A total of £40,000 was awarded to 10 youth-based projects in Glasgow.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/programme/glas-glow-up/>

No Knives Better Lives (Scotland)

No Knives, Better Lives is a national scheme – between the Scottish Government and YouthLink Scotland - that aims to dissuade young people from ASB and carrying knives. It adopts a youth work-based approach, which recognises young people's contributions and is underpinned by the UNCRC.

Youth workers provide young people with information, formulate tools and workshops, create peer support programmes, assist young people's involvement in contributing to community responses to youth violence, and aid them in getting involved in policy and decisions.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.noknivesbetterlives.com/>

Youth Scotland & UK Youth & KFC: 'Hatch' (Scotland)

Hatch is an employability programme designed for young people aged 16-25 years old, who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), or at risk of being NEET. Young people participate in 15 hours of employment skills workshops. The workshops cover topics like aiming high, preparing for work, doing applications, what you are passionate about, and more. The training is carried out by Youth Scotland staff and uses interactive games and activities to keep energy high.

Following the training, young people start a paid work experience placement with KFC or another provider. The placements last four weeks -13 hours a week. Once placements are complete, young people have a chance to interview for a job at KFC, with a real chance of getting hired.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.youthscotland.org.uk/programme/hatch/>

McDonalds & BBC Children in Need: 'Makin it' (UK & Ireland)

McDonald's has recently expanded its collaboration with BBC Children in Need, bringing on board Kick it Out and Youth Music, to create Makin it. An 18-month pilot phase has provided access to welcoming and safe spaces for 16–24-year-olds in restaurants, and vital positive relationships through links with youth workers and youth projects specifically matched to local restaurants and franchisees.

Initially encompassing 70 restaurants as part of the pilot phase, it will soon grow to include 1,450 McDonalds restaurants across the UK, along with the funding of 500 new youth work qualifications (including diverting an unspent part of its Apprenticeship Levy, to give more youth workers an opportunity to carry out their youth work apprenticeship in England).

Further information can be found at: <https://www.mcdonalds.com/gb/en-gb/latest/makinit.html>

Sports Based Provision

Children, young people and adults' participation in sports-based activities has the potential to play a role in addressing ASB. Engaging in such activities has been noted to increase participants motivation, confidence, self-esteem, coping and communication skills (Seal & Harris, 2016; Mason et al. 2017). Some examples are:

Ocean Youth Trust Scotland: On Board with Cashback[9] (Scotland)

'On Board with CashBack' – over the period 2023-2026 – aims to engage with children aged 12-15 from across Scotland, who are on the cusp of ASB, offending, re-offending or being drawn into the youth justice system and who have been affected by Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) or trauma. Every child takes part in a structured programme, which includes 32 hours of group work sessions; 8 hours of outdoor education led by an OYT Scotland Youth Development Worker, and 58 hours of youth work delivered over 5 days in a sail training environment aboard a 70ft yacht. As part of the scheme, children can work towards qualifications (SQA Core Skills Units at Level 3).

Further information can be found at: <https://oytscotland.org.uk/support-us/cashback-for-communities/>

Friday Night Lights' (Scotland)

Based in Leith Community Sport Hub – part of the national Sport Scotland Community Sport Hub - 'Friday Night Lights' fills a gap where historically prevention activities managed by youth work organisations would cease at 7pm on a Friday night and not begin until the start of the next week.

As part of the scheme, every Friday, food is provided; sporting activities such as football, fencing and rugby are run; and two youth workers (funded by Places for People in Scotland) are present to work with the children.

Further information can be found at: <https://sportfirst.sportscotland.org.uk/articles/friday-night-lights>

Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice: 'Levelling the Playing Field' (England and Wales)

Levelling the Playing Field is funded by a £1 million grant from the London Marathon Charitable Trust. It is managed by the Alliance of Sport in Criminal Justice, operating alongside the Youth Justice Board, with research elements being undertaken by the University of Birmingham.

Adopting a public health approach, and utilising sporting activities, the project aims to support more than 11,200 male and female children aged 10–18 years, who are understood as being on the fringes of, or already involved with, the Youth Justice System in England and Wales. The project has a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of children from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

[9] More information on Cashback for Communities (Sports) can be found at: <https://cashbackforcommunities.org/new-report-on-how-cashback-is-changing-lives-through-sport/>

Further information can be found at: <https://www.levellingtheplayingfield.org/>

Education Provision

Increasing children and young people's knowledge concerning the impacts that certain behaviours can have on others, and the wider community, has become an important element of ASB prevention in Scotland. Educational inputs are regularly delivered by local authority staff, emergency services and the third sector:

East Ayrshire Council: 'Youth Action Team Roadshow' (Scotland)

Vibrant Communities, together with Education Services and Community Planning Partners, run Youth Action Team (YAT) roadshows in secondary schools throughout East Ayrshire.

The roadshows are aimed at young people from S1, and encompass seven workshops, focused on a series of dangers that young people can encounter, as well as issues that can impact on the wider community (including ASB).

Police Scotland runs the ASB workshops, with each secondary school campus officer, helping young people appreciate the impacts that can be associated with certain behaviour and supporting their being responsible members of society.

Further information can be found at: <https://newsroom.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/news/youth-action-team-roadshow>

Alcohol and Drug Provision

Enhancing access to alcohol and drug provision has been acknowledged as being a priority in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2021b) – with the ability to access this in a timely manner important for those who may become or are involved in ASB. Although this remains a challenge, examples of rights-based, trauma-informed approaches exist:

BRAVE Stirling (Scotland)

Includem (supported by the Corra Foundation) operates BRAVE Stirling - working with 12–26-year-olds – who reside in Stirling and are either actively using alcohol and or drugs or at higher risk of using alcohol and or drugs.

The project has a strong emphasis on participation, and via community-based 1:1 support, it offers the non-clinical, trauma-informed, wraparound support that those who use our services identify they need to address unresolved trauma and poverty and reach their full potential.

Further information can be found at: <https://includem.org/brave-stirling/>

Mental Health Provision

Ensuring swift access to mental health provision has been highlighted as a priority (Scottish Government, 2017a, Scottish Youth Parliament, 2022) – however, Scotland

continues to experience challenges in this area (Public Health Scotland, 2024). Despite this, innovative examples that focus on mental health in the community exist:

Scottish Action for Mental Health: 'Growing Chrysalis' (Scotland)

'Growing Chrysalis' draws together groups of people and empowers the community to support their mental health and well-being through gardening and other outdoor activities. It is operated by SAMH (Scottish Action for Mental Health) and first began in October 2021, following funding from the Co-op.

To date, Growing Chrysalis has supported a total of 5,842 people in and around Dundee.

Further information can be found at: <https://www.samh.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/dundee-mental-health-service-supports-close-to-6000-people>

Digital Provision

As society has become more digitally conversant, there have been concerns expressed that ASB is also moving online, via social media (HMIC, 2015). However, accompanying this shift, there have also been positive and innovative examples of agencies and organisations using social media to educate about the impacts of ASB, as well as a means of reporting instances in the community. Some examples are:

Fearless: Spook-tacular Campaign (Scotland)

Fearless – the youth programme of charity Crimestoppers – created a campaign to keep teenagers throughout Scotland safe at autumn. Aimed at Halloween and Bonfire Night, the charity's pro-social behaviour messaging gives teenagers details on how to stay safe and look out for their local community.

The digital campaign operated across Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok – with each of the outputs co-produced by the charity's youth volunteers.

Further information can be found at: <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/fearless/news/2023/scotland-autumn-campaign>

StreetSnap (Wales)

Developed for use by police, youth workers, cleaning operatives, council employees, housing and education professionals, StreetSnap can be used by users to photograph hateful graffiti and report it immediately to the appropriate authorities. Street cleaning teams are notified right away, who then come along to the location and expunge the hateful signs.

Counter-terrorism police officers are also sent the data, along with youth workers and social services, to analyse the information and take the appropriate actions. Interventions can include youth education sessions, youth groups, and social clubs – aimed at enhancing understanding of the problem and motivating those creating it to consider their actions more closely.

Further information can be found at: https://www.swansea.ac.uk/criminology_sociology_social-policy/street-snap-project-research/

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual safeguarding (Firmin, 2020a; see also HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2023) highlights the traditional limits of child protection responses (e.g. involving parents/carers) and draws attention to extra-familial harm (occurring in settings like parks, shopping centres, restaurants, transport stations, online, etc) - which has often fallen outside safeguarding's remit. In practice, this has meant that children experiencing extra-familial harm, who display offending behaviour, have often been responded to through criminal justice, rather than safeguarding processes.

Four key features of a contextual safeguarding response (Firmin, 2020b:6) have been proposed: "1. Target the contexts in which harm/abuse occurs. 2. Use child welfare and child protection as the principal focus and legislative framework. 3. Feature partnerships with individuals/organisations who have a reach into, or responsibility for, the places where harm has occurred. 4. Measure the contextual impact/outcomes of the response."

So far, the main testing ground for contextual safeguarding approaches has been in children's social care, however, as Firmin (2020b:10) has recognised: "Among areas testing Contextual Safeguarding approaches [...] some have trialed bringing together Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Child Protection or child welfare meetings for individual children, and wider peer groups, who are harming others and being harmed themselves."

Restorative Justice

The Scottish Government in their 2019 Action Plan committed to having Restorative Justice (RJ) services 'widely available across Scotland by 2023'. RJ is defined by the Scottish Government (2019:5) as:

"... a process of independent, facilitated contact, which supports constructive dialogue between a victim and a person who has harmed (whether this be an adult, a child, a young person or a representative of a corporate or other body) arising from an offence or alleged offence."

A recent review (Scottish Community Safety Network & Scottish Government, 2023:21) found that certain respondents advocated for the use of RJ (and mediation) in response to instances of ASB. Where RJ is engaged in respect of ASB, the Scottish Government has stated that it is vital that it is entirely voluntary for all parties participating and is overseen by appropriate specialists in line with guidance (see Scottish Government, 2017b). Although there may be benefits attached to using RJ approaches – it is important that it is not employed for behaviour which could otherwise be dealt with out with a RJ process (possibly leading to net-widening (drawing individuals into a process or system at a more intensive level than is proportionate to their actions) – see Vaswani & Brown, 2022).

Summary

The lack of an agreed or consistent definition of ASB - owing to both its 'vagueness' and 'subjectivity' - was initially highlighted. Key milestones in Scotland's ASB policy, legislation and guidance were then outlined, illustrating that in recent years there has been a move

towards 'prevention and early and effective intervention' (Scottish Government, 2009). Scottish data relating to both 'prevalence' and 'perceptions' around ASB was summarised, however, it was acknowledged that the impact made by the COVID-19 pandemic is yet to be fully understood and requires greater examination.

Research carried out into victimisation was reviewed – encompassing how demographics and levels of deprivation and poverty can affect victims' experiences, the types of negative ASB impacts to which victims can be subjected, as well as the barriers that continue to exist around reporting. The interaction between ASB and children's rights was explored, with particular attention being paid to relevant UNCRC Articles and research relating to how children engage with 'public spaces'. Studies concerning the underlying factors often associated with ASB were summarised before the key features of a 'prevention' approach were outlined – along with a selection of case studies.

The literature review provides context for the survey findings presented later in this report.

Methods

This section provides information about the methods employed in the report.

Literature Review

Academic or grey literature (outside mainstream publishing) was searched relating to research, policy documents or organisational reports published on Antisocial Behaviour (ASB), or closely aligned subject areas possessing relevance (e.g. children's rights, policing, youth justice, housing, etc).

Websites of organisations whose work relates to ASB (e.g. government/ parliament, governance bodies, third sector organisations, etc.) were reviewed for any relevant literature. Additionally, the following electronic databases were searched: ProQuest, Scopus, EBSCOhost (APA Psychart), and Google Scholar.

To be included in the review, literature needed to be: English language; published in the UK/Ireland or related to ASB in the UK/ Ireland; and produced between the dates 1st January 2004 – 31st July 2024.[10] A total of 77 pieces of literature were incorporated within the review.

Survey

A survey (see **Appendix A**) was developed using Qualtrics and consisted of 29 questions, of which one pertained to participant consent, and a further three questions related to the respondent's role and their organisation. Of the remaining 25 questions, 16 were closed questions (producing quantitative data), with the other 9 being open-ended (producing qualitative data). Of the 29 questions, respondents may only answer questions that were relevant to them.

The survey was distributed to key stakeholders, partners and sectors of commerce affected by ASB in Scotland and closed on 2.7.24 – the survey was open for a four-week period.

Frequencies for the closed questions were produced in Microsoft Excel, whilst open-ended questions were coded using NVivo software –forming the basis of the thematic findings encompassed within the report.

Ethical Consent

The research was granted ethical approval by the University of Strathclyde's Ethics Committee on 31.5.2024

[10] Excluding United Nations documents and standards.

Survey Findings

This section presents quantitative and qualitative findings from the survey distributed to key stakeholders, partners and sectors of commerce “affected” by ASB in Scotland. A total of 150 respondents provided their consent to take part in the survey.

About Survey Respondents and their Organisations

Figure 2 reveals that the largest number of survey respondents either worked for/ or were involved in transport, followed by community safety partnership/ ASB teams, other, social work, housing, health, cultural sports and leisure services, retail, and third sector. Only the ambulance service did not respond to the survey request.

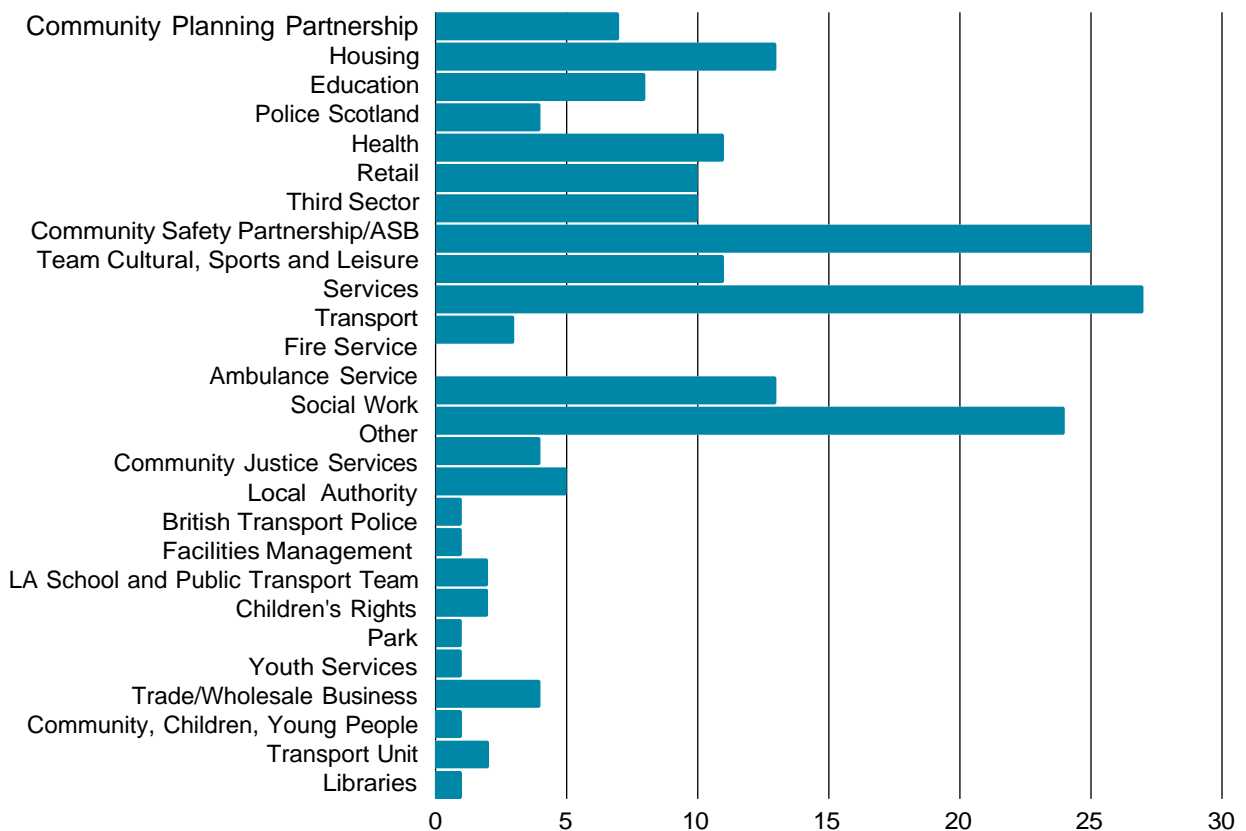


Figure 2: Organisations that respondents work for/ or in which they are involved

As **Figure 3** illustrates, every local authority area in Scotland was separately covered by respondents’ organisations, apart from the Shetland Islands due to technical issues. Nationwide was the most chosen response with 35 respondents providing national support, followed by Glasgow, West Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, South Lanarkshire, Argyll and Bute, and Perth and Kinross.

Area	No. of respondents	Area	No. of respondents
Nationwide	35	Inverclyde	7
Aberdeen	8	Midlothian	4
Aberdeenshire	5	North Ayrshire	8
Angus	7	North Lanarkshire	8
Argyll and Bute	9	Orkney Islands	2
Edinburgh	7	Perth and Kinross	9
Clackmannanshire	2	Renfrewshire	7
Comhairle	2	Scottish Borders	3
Dumfries and Galloway	2	Shetland Islands	0
Dundee	7	South Ayrshire	7
East Ayrshire	6	South Lanarkshire	10
East Dumbartonshire	7	Stirling	2
East Lothian	11	Highland	4
East Renfrewshire	8	Moray	6
Falkirk	2	West Dunbartonshire	11
Fife	3	West Lothian	4
Glasgow	14	Other	4

Figure 3: Local authority areas that respondents' organisations cover

More organisations worked with those experiencing ASB than those "carrying it out", although a number worked with both groups of people (see **Table 3**).

Table 3: Groups that respondents organisations engage/ work with

Carrying out ASB	Experiencing ASB	Other	Not Answered
78	98	28	30
Other (where specified): patient calls, landlords and letting agents (2), SPT/bus companies (2), Other third parties, support agencies, police (3), professionals, education for children and young people, third sector (3), fire service (x2), front line service, children and young people (4), family/community, LA's sports community, people preventing ASB, schools, security/cleaning services, community safety partners (x2).			

The Nature and Context of ASB in Local Settings

Figure 4 illustrates that the ASB was seen mostly as being ‘somewhat of a problem’ – with only a single response suggesting it was ‘not a problem at all’ and 14 responses considering it to be ‘a very big problem’. Figure 4 suggests that views of the extent of ASB vary depending on the region and the organisation reporting its prevalence, but the majority of responses reflect that ASB was consistently a problem across Scotland.

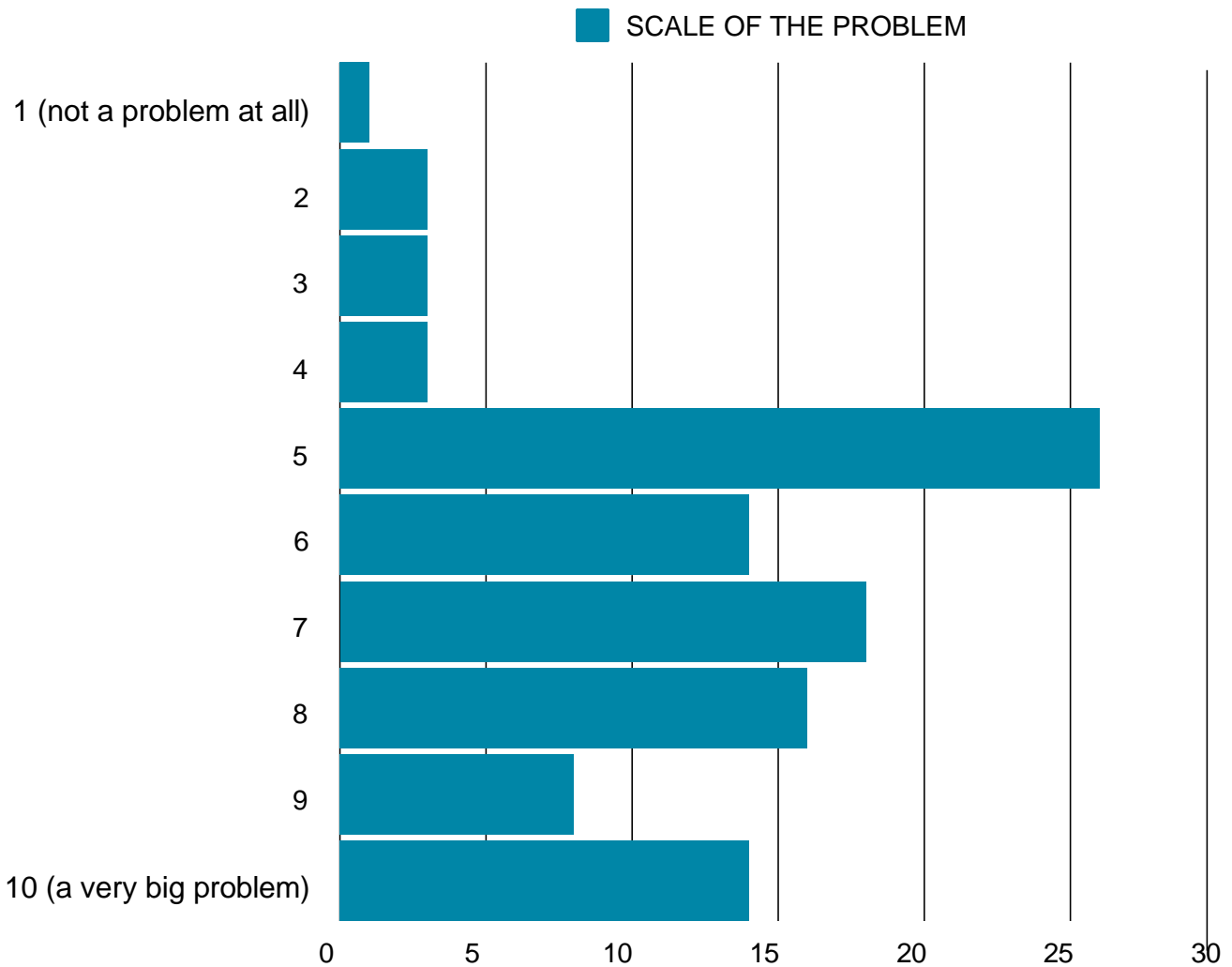


Figure 4: Views on the prevalence of ASB

The Localised Impact of ASB

When considering the impact of ASB in their community, most qualitative survey responses coalesced around three overarching themes - the impact of ASB on the workforce, on the community, and on commerce.

i Impact on the Workforce

Many responses referenced staff members experiencing verbal abuse, threatening behaviour and physical assault:

“Most of our members, convenience retailers and their staff, experience abuse, threatening behaviour and violence on a daily or at least weekly basis.” [Retail Sector Respondent]

The way in which ASB can adversely affect staff member's mental health and well-being was also highlighted – for example, several responses referenced that it caused staff members ‘anxiety’, ‘distress’ and ‘fear and alarm’. Several responses also suggested that ASB impacts could create challenges around staff retention and recruitment:

“It can also dissuade people from wanting to drive a school bus and this can lead to driver shortage and risks to LA’s to be able to deliver their statutory school transport requirement.” [Transport/ Education Sector Respondent]

ASB it was also noted, could possess more general repercussions for ‘staff morale’.

ii Impact on the Community

Community-based impacts were referenced across various responses – most responses within this theme highlighted the fear within the community that ASB generates, with emotions such as being ‘scared’ and ‘nervous’ frequently cited. As one response emphasised: “Our community indicate that they are fearful of going out, particularly at night.” [Housing/Community Safety Partnership/ ASB Team Respondent]. Other responses highlighted that ASB could adversely affect ‘community cohesion and spirit’, ‘reduce quality of life for residents’, and perpetuate ‘negative perceptions of community areas’. For specifically young people in the community, it was noted in certain responses that ASB meant that ‘they do not feel safe’ and ‘potentially encourages young people to take action to protect themselves...’

iii Impact on Commerce

The negative impacts that ASB possesses for ‘commerce’ was a further key theme identified – most responses referenced how customers or service users’ experiences could be adversely affected by ASB, causing them to feel ‘unsafe’, ‘wary’ and ‘fearful’, and ultimately, resulting in them avoiding retail destinations or refraining from using services like public transport:

“People are fearful of going out. They are being put off from coming to our venues and accessing our services.” [Cultural, Sports and Leisure Services Sector Respondent]

Relatedly, the ‘disruption’ caused to services by ASB, and the knock-on impact for service ‘availability’ was also referenced in some responses. Other responses specified that ASB could: ‘reduce footfall in the city centre’, ‘impact on tourism’, make investors ‘reluctant to invest’ and result in ‘damage to organisational property’.

Out with these overarching themes, attention was also afforded to the way in which regularly needing to engage with ASB can act to ‘drain resources’.

Those Most Involved and Affected by ASB

As **Figure 5** depicts, those aged 12-17 years old were seen as being those most likely to be carrying out ASB – followed by those 18-25, 26+, and then, those under 12. It also

shows that those 26+ years old were seen as being those most 'affected' by ASB – followed by those 18-25, 12-17, and then, those under 12. While the age range 26+ is wide ranging it is in keeping with legislative and social policy markers of age in Scotland and an open text box was included to gather detailed information. Six respondents used this option stating 20 – 30s, under 30, 20 – 40, 25 – 55 and 69+ in addition to 'delivery drivers' where not age was stated.

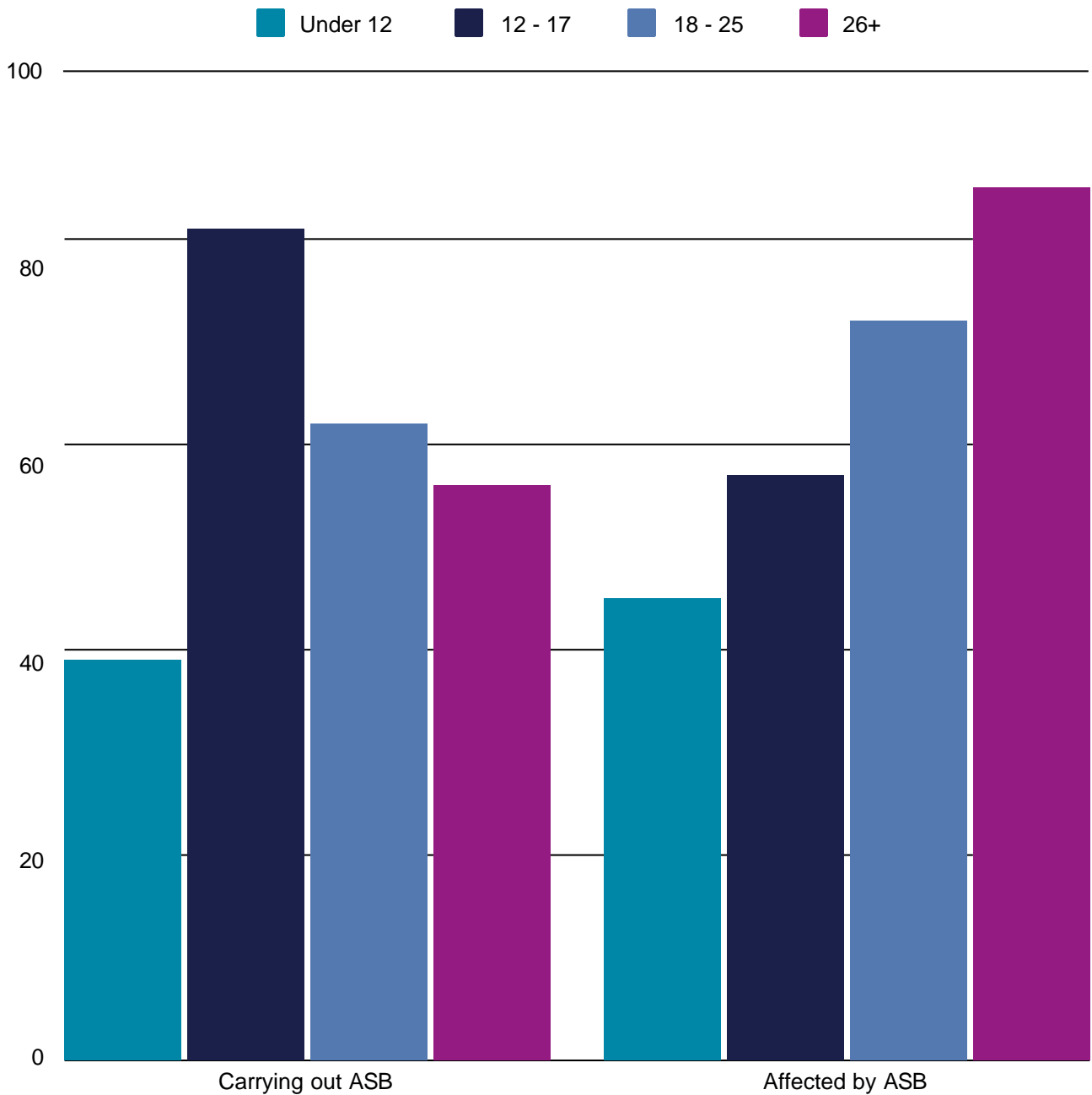


Figure 5: Ages of those 'carrying out' and 'affected' by ASB

When considering those most involved in ASB, most qualitative survey responses centred on children and young people, persons with addictions, persons with mental health issues, persons experiencing deprivation or financial hardship, and no specific demographic involved. Various references were made to 'school-age children', 'school pupils', 'young people aged under 18', those 'between the age of 11 and 16', 'youths aged 10-17', 'young people between 12 and 17', and 'young people (12-16)'. In providing context around children and young people's involvement in ASB, certain sub-themes were discernible, with responses highlighting 'boredom' as a factor, owing to a lack of local facilities and youth services being available for these age groups:

"Young people who have nothing to do. No youth clubs or places for them to go and hang out. Sports clubs all cost money, and time, so not really accessible." [Third Sector Respondent]

Other responses drew attention to young people who were 'not attending' or were 'excluded' from school, those experiencing a 'chaotic home life', as well as the wider impact being made by social media. Numerous responses also highlighted persons with addictions being involved in ASB – with various references being made to both alcohol and drugs – whilst several responses also referred to persons with 'poor mental health' and those being adversely impacted by 'poverty'. Other responses emphasised, however, that ASB involves a 'mixture of ages' and 'all demographics in society', rather than any single section of society.

Regarding those perceived as being most affected by ASB, many of the qualitative responses provided referred to members of staff (e.g. workforce), along with customers/ service users. Examples included: 'car park attendants', those working 'in the National Park'; 'staff in healthcare settings, including community nursing teams'; 'bus drivers and depot staff'; members of 'security'; 'cleaning staff'; and 'shop staff'. Many other responses, however, highlighted that 'all demographics are impacted' and 'all members of the community', rather than any one section of society. Where age for example was referenced, responses tended to cite older persons as those being most affected by ASB:

"The elderly being scared to walk in the community streets, leading to isolation and loneliness..." [Cultural, Sports and Leisure Services Sector Respondent]

However, there was also recognition amongst certain responses that young people, visitors to an area, those with an illness or disability, and those residing in deprived areas, were also affected.

Root Causes of ASB

Figure 6 reveals what the main or root cause or causes of ASB in respondents' areas were understood as being. The most common response was drugs – this was followed by mental health, poverty/inequality, and a lack of resources in the community.

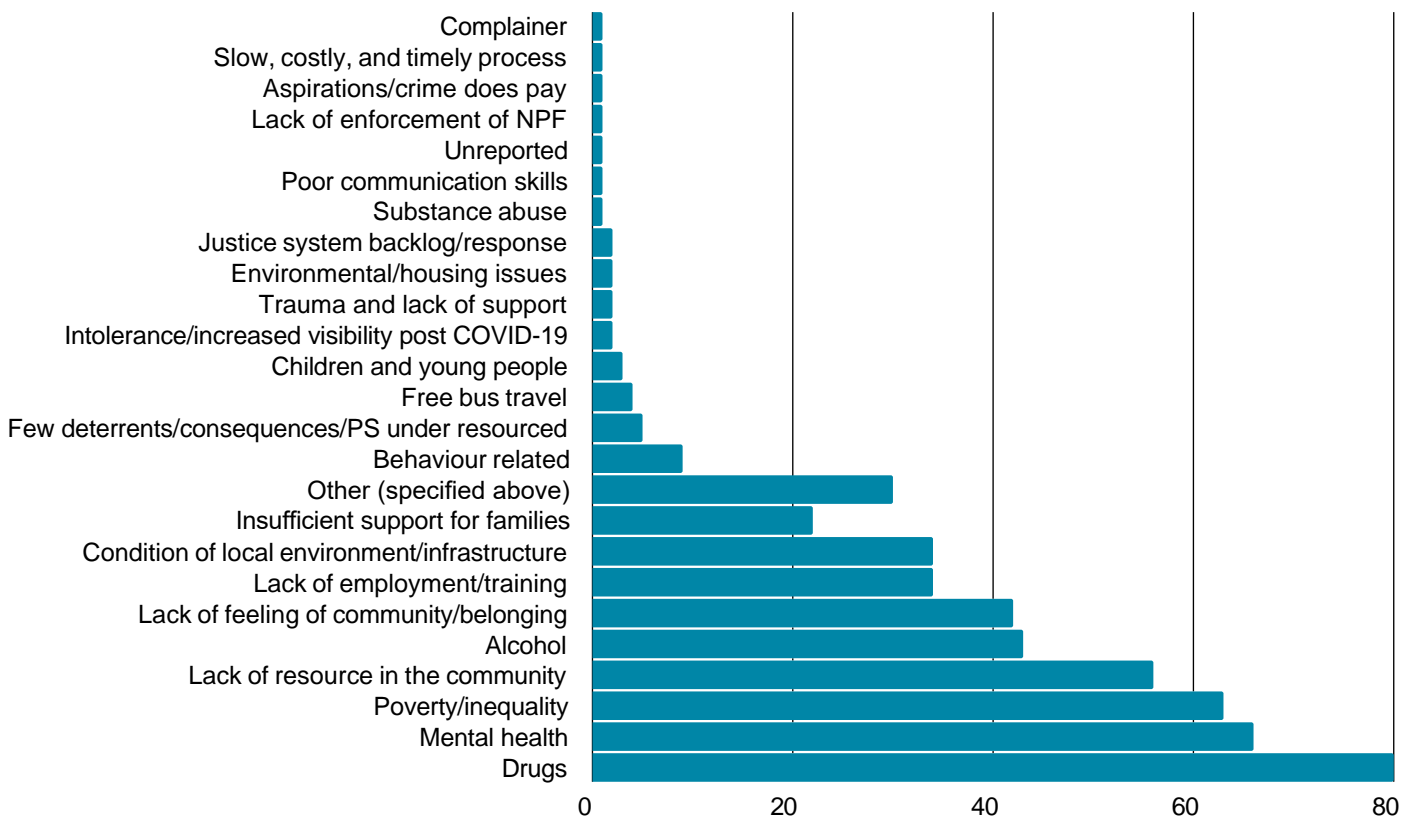


Figure 6: Views on the main or root cause or causes of ASB

Most Pressing Types of ASB – Across Different Age Groups

Figures 7, 8, and 9 illustrate the prevalence of different types of ASB community/organisations encounter. The diagrams reflect different age ranges – for under 18s, 18-25, and 26+, and respondents were asked to identify them in terms of gravity (1 being the most pressing).

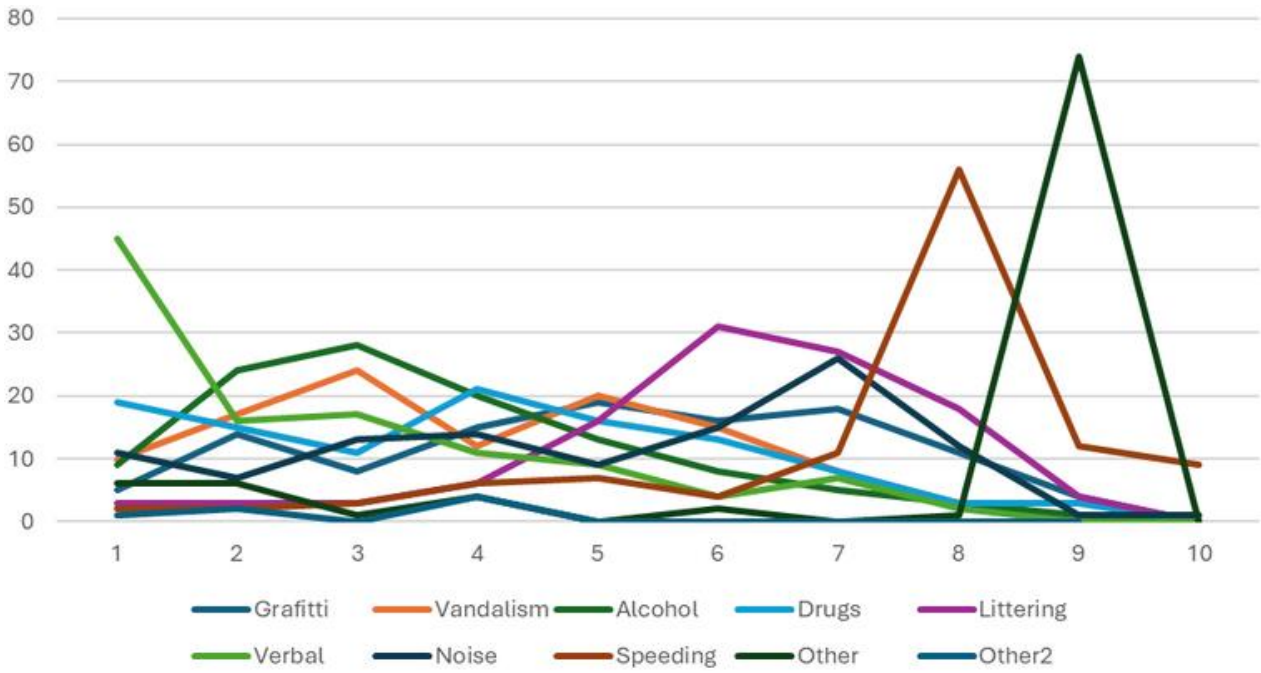


Figure 7: Most pressing types of ASB community/ organisation encounters by under 18s

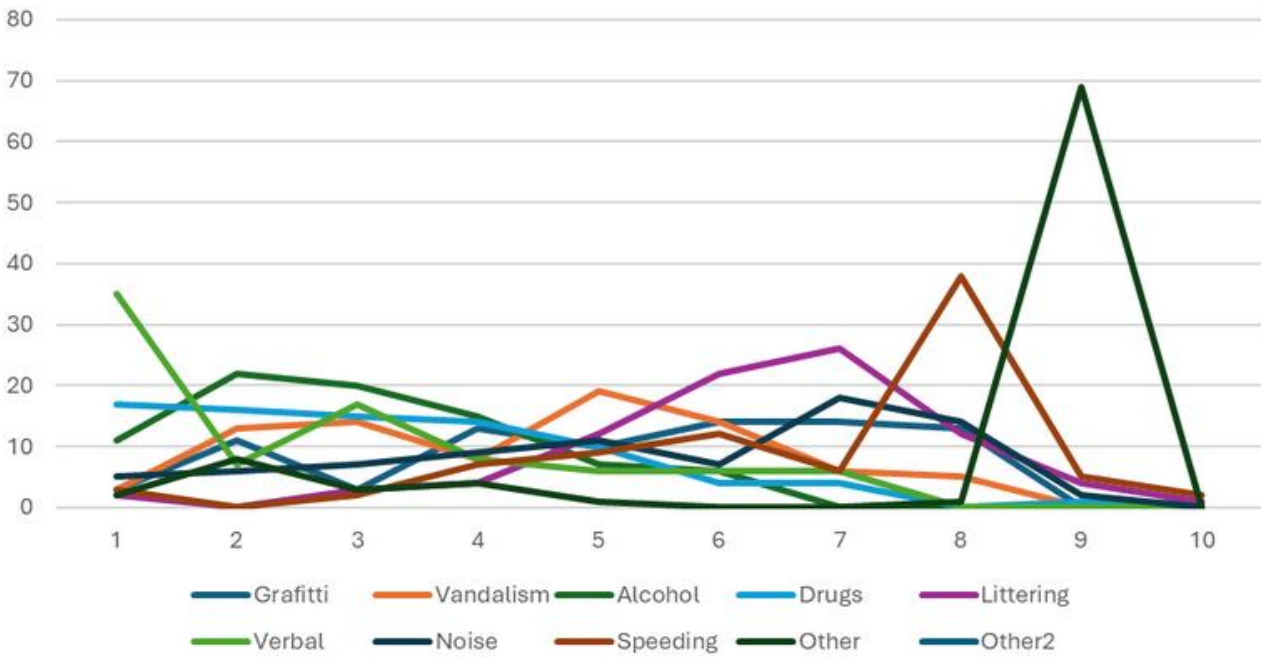


Figure 8: Most pressing types of ASB community/ organisation encounters by 18-25

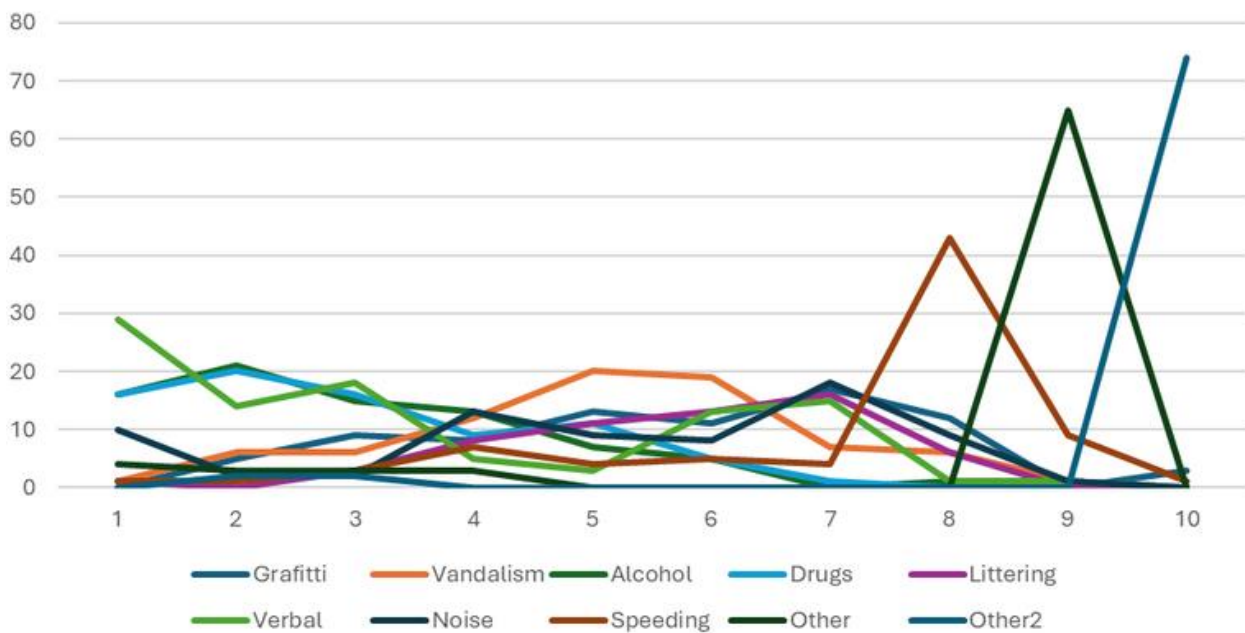


Figure 9: Most pressing types of ASB community/ organisation encounters by 26+

Figures 10 – 18 illustrate the ‘severity of concerns’ for graffiti, vandalism, alcohol, drugs, littering/ fly tipping, verbal abuse and threatening behaviour, noise, speeding, other and other 2 – for each respective age grouping (1 being the most pressing).

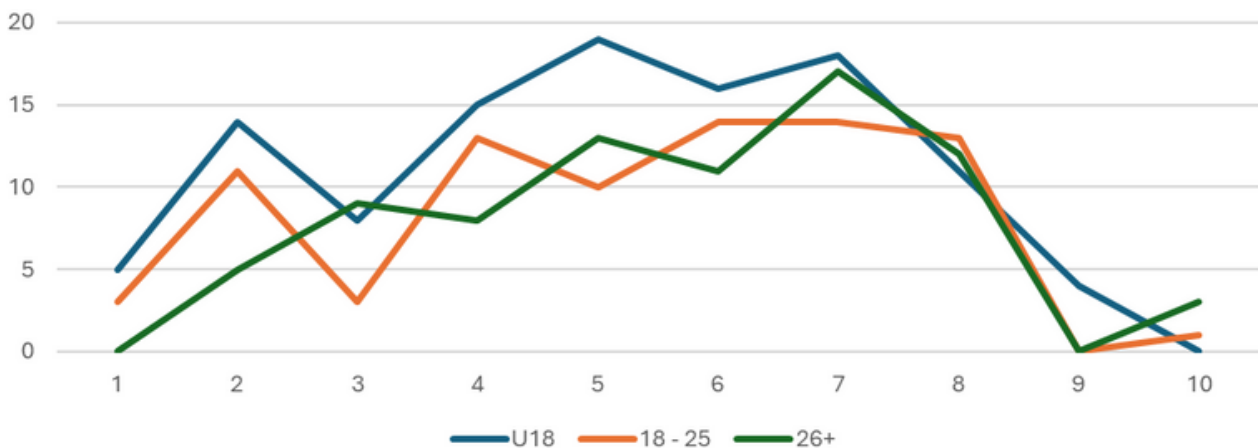


Figure 10: Severity of concerns around ‘graffiti’

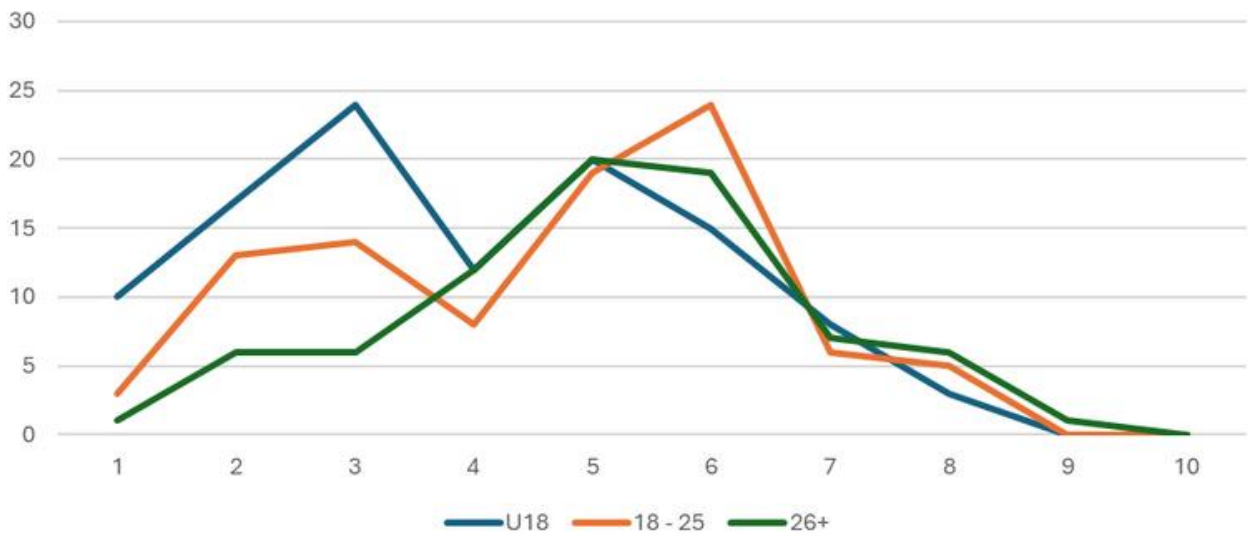


Figure 11: Severity of concerns around 'vandalism'

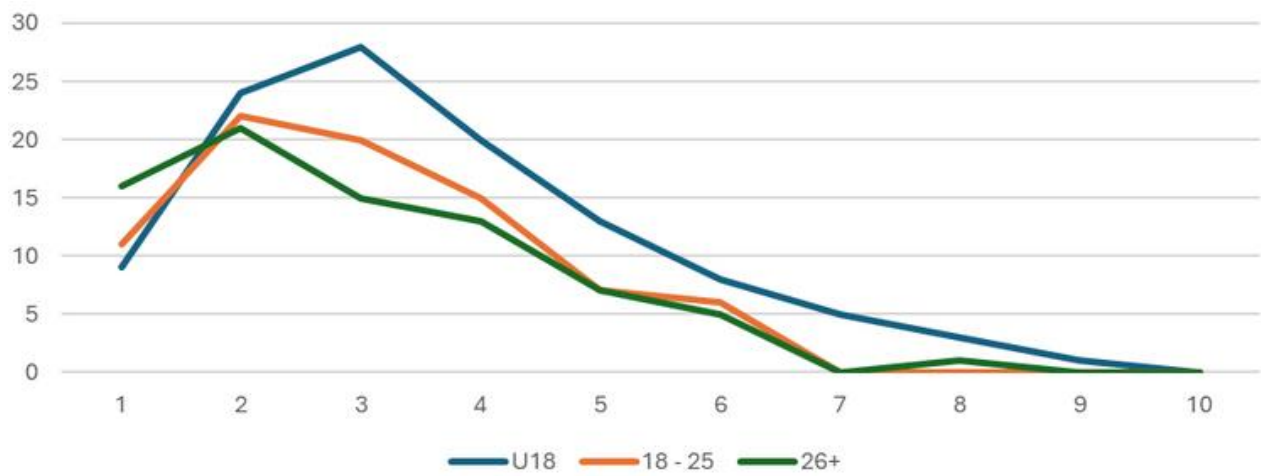


Figure 12: Severity of concerns around 'alcohol'

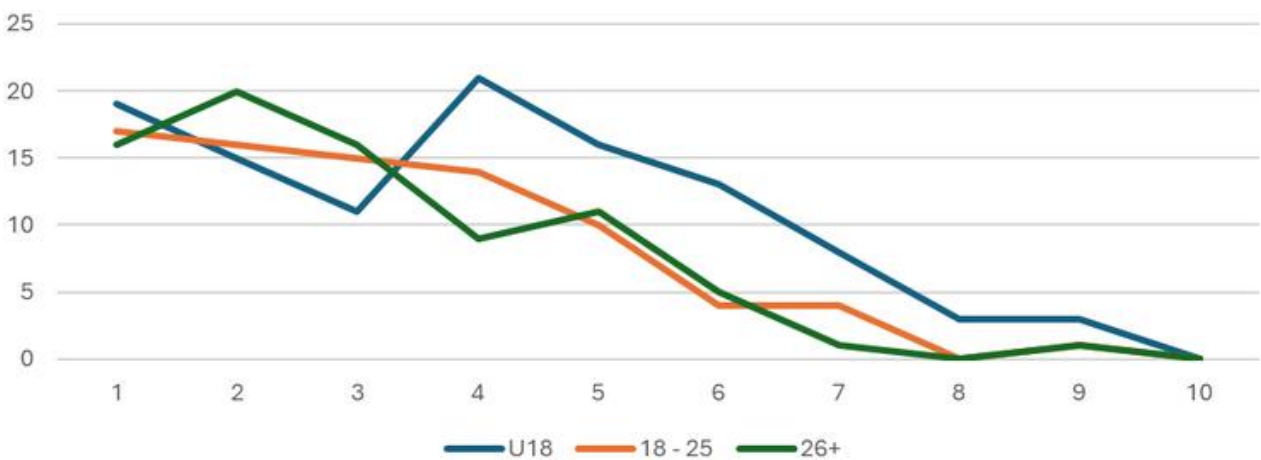


Figure 13: Severity of concerns around 'drugs'

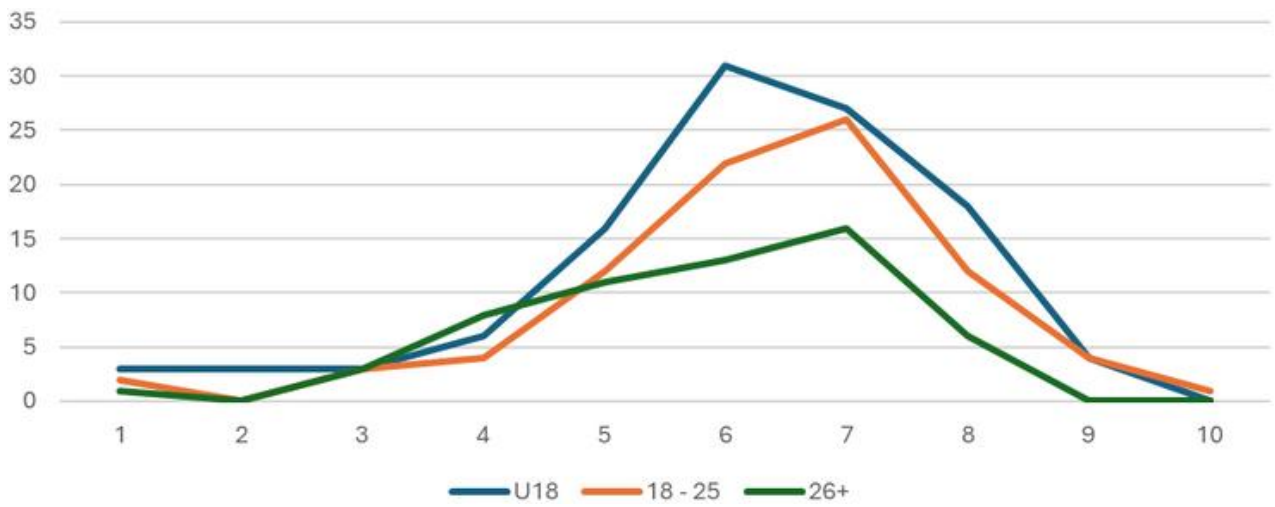


Figure 14: Severity of concerns around 'littering/ fly tipping'

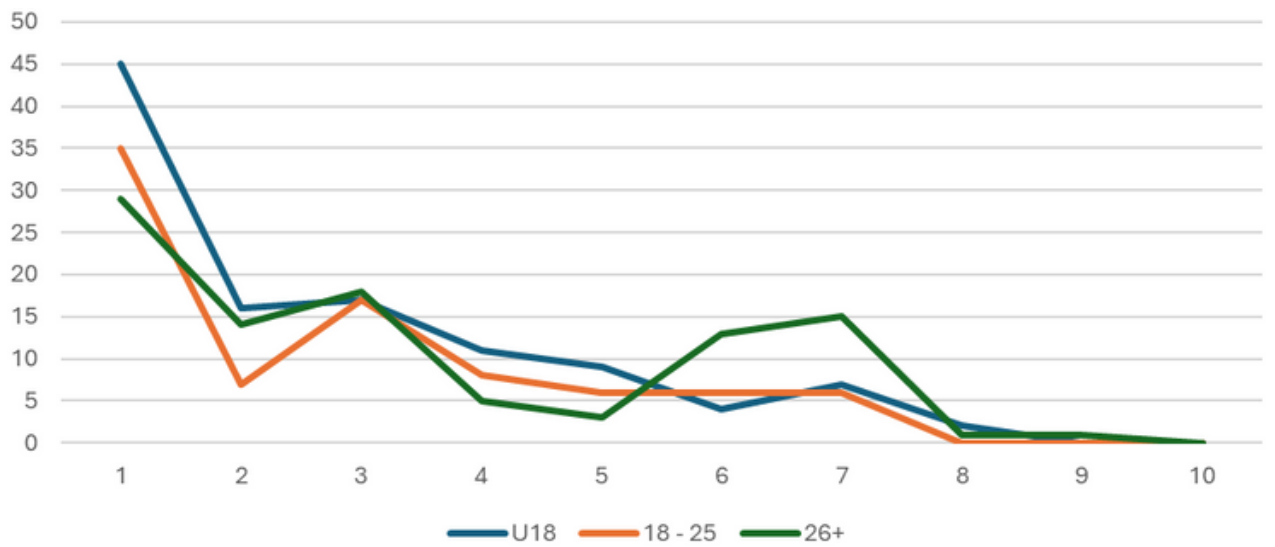


Figure 15: Severity of concerns around 'verbal abuse/threatening behaviour'

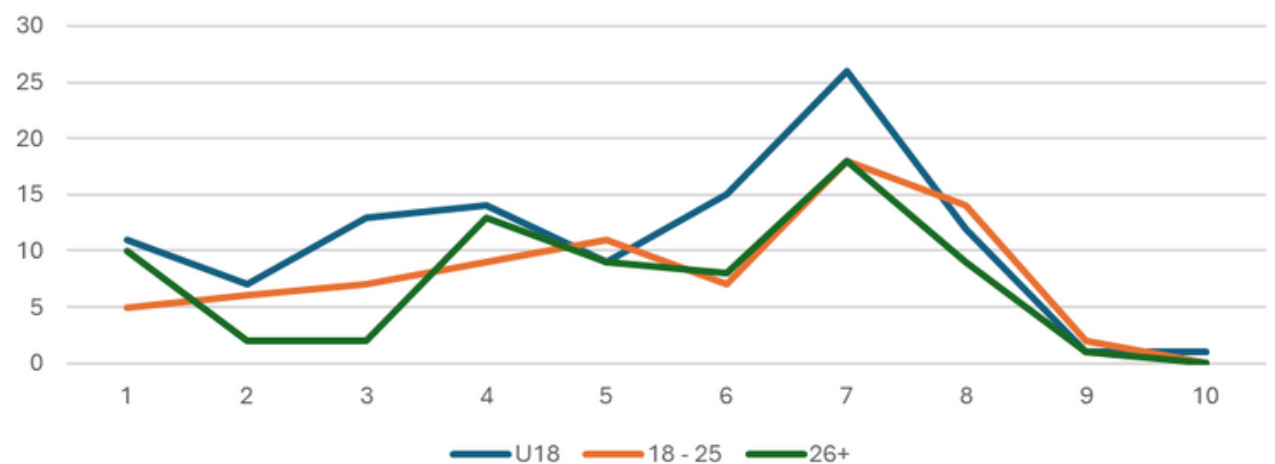


Figure 16: Severity of concerns around 'noise'

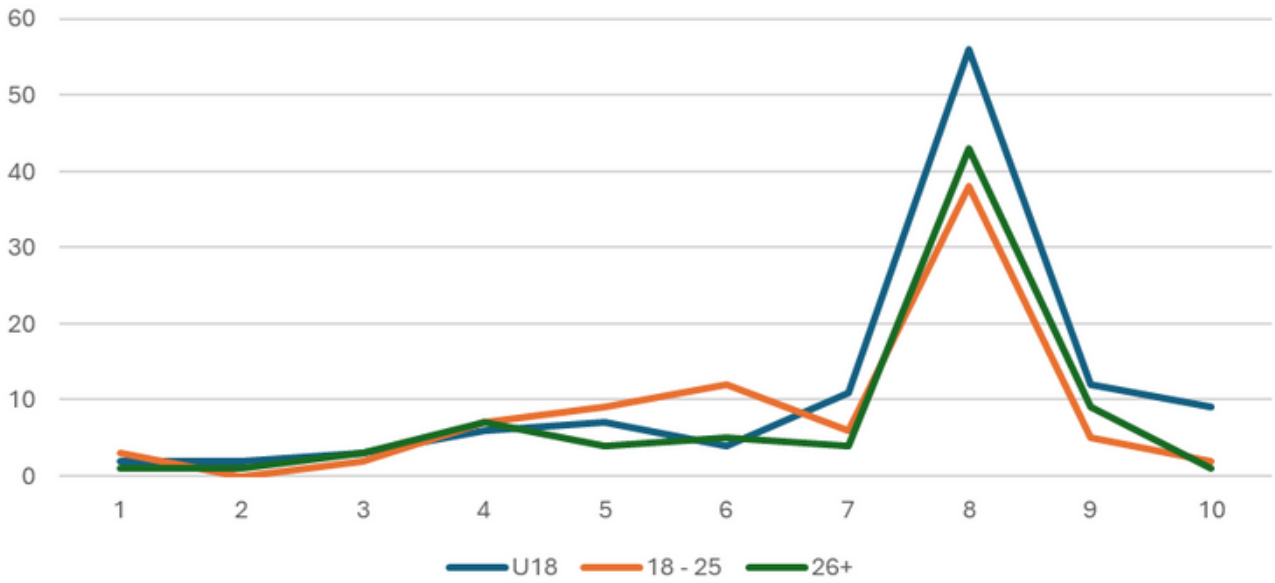


Figure 17: Severity of concerns around 'speeding'

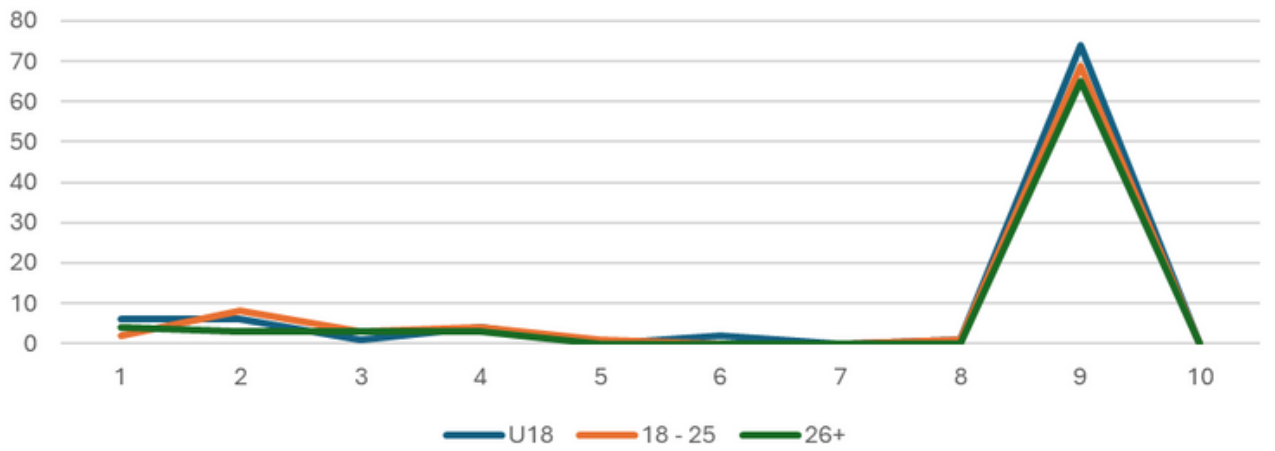


Figure 18: Severity of concerns around 'Other'

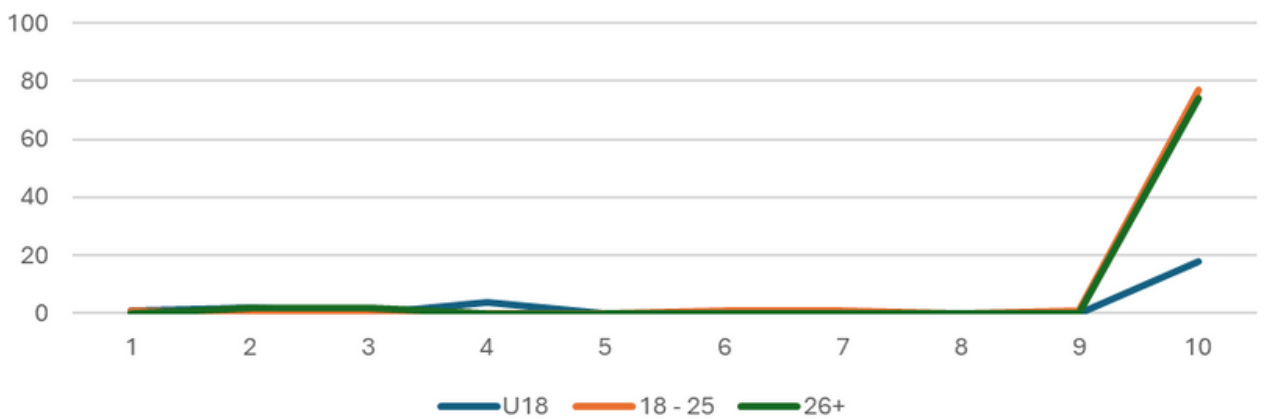


Figure 19: Severity of concerns around 'Other 2'

Issues that were ranked high within **Figures 18** and **19** included violence (3), poor quality housing (3), poverty (2), willful fire raising, fly tipping, carrying weapons (2), shop lifting (4), willful fire raising, off road bike usage and vehicular nuisance. Areas identified as having lower prevalence included disruptive and rowdy behaviour, theft, physical abuse and assault including Actual Bodily Harm and murder reflecting ambiguity about people’s understanding of ASB and criminal activity.

Organisations ASB Data Collection Activities

The following tables (**4, 5, 6, 7, 8**) offer insights around organisations ASB data collection activities. **Table 4** reveals that more organisations collect or have data on ASB, than those who do not. **Table 5** shows that the source of the data collected most often originates from the person affected, followed by the local authority, other, and then Police Scotland. Amongst those who provided a response, there was slightly more support for data accurately capturing the true level of ASB in an area, than not doing so (**Table 6**), however, it was felt that there is a disconnect between community experiences of ASB and the level of reporting (**Table 7**). **Table 8** reveals that the most common barrier to reporting ASB was ‘concern nothing will be done’, followed by ‘concern of retribution/ an escalation’, then ‘mistrust of authorities’.

Table 4: Does your organisation collect or have data on ASB

Yes	No	Don't Know	Didn't Answer
66	16	15	53

Table 5: What is the source of the ASB data collected?

Person affected	37
Community	10
Local authority	28
Police Scotland	21
Third Sector	5
Other	22
No answer/ multiple answers	80/20
Other (specified): Young people, landlords, SFRS, SPT (2), internal system (10), CCTV, national park authority, person who carried it out, British Transport Police (2), Community safety partners.	

Table 6: Does data accurately capture the true level of ASB in your area?

Yes	No	Don't Know	Didn't Answer
24	21	21	84

Table 7: Is there a disconnect between community experiences of ASB and the level of reporting

Yes	No	Don't Know	Didn't Answer
63	2	28	57

Table 8: Barriers to reporting ASB

Concern nothing will be done	67
Concern everything that can be done has been done	18
Concern of retribution/an escalation	57
Mistrust of authorities	29
Practical Barriers	18
Other	20
Other (specified): Excessive waiting periods for 101 (5), don't know, low confidence in police due to resources (3), grassing – won't report, high tolerance of ASB – see it as part of job, want to sort it themselves/direct threats, apathy, not knowing who to report to, staff not reporting, age of young people involved, children unlikely to know how to report, level deemed not worth reporting.	

Approaches to Preventing ASB

Concerning approaches to 'preventing' ASB, most qualitative responses converged on the following key themes: the role of multi-agency and partnership working; the use of surveillance and monitoring; education inputs; and training.

Many responses identified multi-agency and partnership working as central to how their organisation attempted to prevent ASB – here, reference was made to the use of task forces, steering groups, and working and tactical groups. Multi-agency and partnership approaches frequently encompassed: the emergency services, local authority departments, housing providers and the third sector. It was also evident from several responses, that 'specialist staff' were often employed within organisations to engage with ASB - such as ASB coordinators and investigators. Relatedly, certain responses noted that

partnership working also extended to the wider community (as opposed to simply agency partners) via involvement in local 'community groups and events'.

Many other responses, however, focused on the utilisation of 'surveillance and monitoring' activities – most often referenced within this theme was the use of CCTV, along with on-site security officers/ patrols: "We have monitored CCTV covering high-risk areas of the shop-floor" [Retail Sector Respondent]. The use of body-worn cameras and noise apps/ monitors was also noted. Another theme discernible within responses was the role played by education – numerous references were made concerning the use of education inputs, particularly in relation to children and young people:

"We are adopting a 'problem-solving approach' via engagement with the local schools and partnering with Police Scotland to educate youths about the wider impact of anti-social behaviour and vandalism. through classroom initiatives." [Transport Sector Respondent]

Several responses also referenced the importance of providing information to communities around ASB, along with how to report it (for example, through leaflet drops, specific campaigns, and sections on organisations' websites). The use of training was also highlighted in many responses – for example, in relation to: 'de-escalation'; 'mental health and awareness'; and 'prevention and management of violence and aggression'. Outwith these core themes, certain responses drew attention to the role of mediation; architecture and design (e.g. door controls, lighting, signage); the use of charters and acceptable behaviour policies; as well as age-related sales and the barring of customers/ service users from entering premises.

Responding to ASB

A wide range of agencies were identified in qualitative responses as working with those carrying out ASB. Most referenced were the police, local authority departments (e.g. social work, criminal justice services, housing, education, safer community teams, etc.) and the third sector (e.g. youth, homelessness, drug and alcohol, education organisations, etc.). Certain other responses also identified housing providers, the NHS (e.g. mental health services), and the fire and rescue service. Regarding agencies 'working with' those experiencing ASB, again, the police, local authority and the third sector (e.g. Victim Support Scotland, Women's Aid, Citizens Advice Scotland) were most referenced. Other responses, referred to: housing providers, fire and rescue, and ambulance services.

Concerning how respondents' organisations responded to ASB, the most referenced action was to 'involve or escalate to the police' – some of these responses were accompanied by terms such as 'when appropriate' or 'when required' or 'as a last resort'. If school pupils were involved in ASB, some responses also stated that they would report the incident to the relevant school. Several responses also highlighted that their organisation had an agreed 'strategy' and 'policies and procedures' that would be implemented when responding to ASB:

"All complaints are progressed via the multi-agency antisocial behaviour policy that can be viewed at the [xxxx] website." [Housing/ Community Safety Partnership/ ASB Team Respondent]

Certain other responses highlighted using powers available within their organisations remit (e.g. warning letters, ASBOs, temporary or permanent bus bans, policing powers, etc.). Regarding timeframes, where answers were provided, responding to initial complaints could take from 24 hours to 5 working days (dependent on the nature/gravity), whilst cases would be investigated and closed from 20 to 30 working days. In keeping with Part 1 of the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 Local Authorities and Chief Constables produced strategies for dealing with ASB, for example, Scottish Borders. Four priorities or pillars, also known as the PIER approach, were identified in 2004: prevention, intervention, enforcement and rehabilitation. While the four pillars from the Promoting Positive Outcomes Working Together to Prevent Anti-Social Behaviour in Scotland' (2009) framework moved away from enforcement this continues to be reflected in practice across Scotland.

Table 9: Are responses in your area in line with the four pillars of ASB

	Yes	No	Don't know
Prevention 1	40	30	15
Intervention 2	47	22	15
Enforcement 3	41	24	18
Rehabilitation 4	20	29	35

Most respondents identified 'prevention' as the first pillar priority (see **Table 10**), but there was considerable variance in how the national approach was viewed with only eight respondents agreeing with the way the four pillars were prioritised, however the response rate for this question was just under 24%

Table 10: Rating the four pillars in order of importance

Prevention, Intervention, Rehabilitation, Enforcement	14
Prevention, Enforcement, Intervention, Rehabilitation	13
Prevention, Intervention, Enforcement, Rehabilitation	8
Prevention, Enforcement, Rehabilitation, Intervention	4
Intervention, Enforcement, Prevention, Rehabilitation	4
Enforcement, Prevention, Rehabilitation, Intervention	4
Intervention, Prevention, Rehabilitation, Enforcement	3
Enforcement, Prevention, Intervention, Rehabilitation	2
Intervention, Prevention, Enforcement, Rehabilitation	2
Enforcement, Intervention, Prevention, Rehabilitation	1
Rehabilitation, Prevention, Intervention, Enforcement	1
Prevention, Rehabilitation, Intervention, Enforcement	1
Prevention, Rehabilitation, Enforcement, Intervention	1

Use of Legislation

Qualitative responses revealed a wide range of “additional legislation” being used in ASB work – covering areas such as the environment, housing, civic government, criminal justice, retail, emergency services, health and safety, children, education, transport, and equality and human rights. For example:

- **Environment:** Environmental Protection Act 1990
- **Housing:** Housing (Scotland) Act 2014; Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016
- **Civic Government:** Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982
- **Criminal Justice:** Misuse of Drugs Act 1971; Psychoactive Substances Act 2016; Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- **Retail:** Protection of Workers (Retail and Age-restricted Goods and Services) (Scotland) Act 2021; Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010.
- **Emergency Services:** Emergency Workers (Scotland) Act 2005
- **Health and Safety:** Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- **Children:** Children (Scotland) Act 1995; UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024
- **Education:** Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act [11]
- **Transport:** National Bus Travel Concession Scheme for Young Persons (Scotland) Order 2021
- **Equality and Human Rights:** Equality Act 2010; Human Rights Act 1998
- **Other:** Regulation of Investigatory Powers Scotland Act 2000; Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007

Certain responses expanded on the current legislative landscape – these comments highlighted the ‘outdated’ nature of the 2004 Act, the idea that legislation was ‘helpful in some cases, but not suitable for all’, that there can be ‘conflict’ between the different Acts, and that there continues to exist a lack of awareness of the ‘whole legislative environment’.

Table 10: How helpful or unhelpful is legislation relating to ASB in tackling the problem of ASB

Helpful	Unhelpful	Not sure what the legislation is or what it covers	Don't know
28	18	27	0

[11] The legislation was amended by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act (2009).

Views on Support Required

In considering how other agencies could support respondents' organisations to prevent and tackle ASB, several themes emerged from the qualitative responses – for example, a lack of resources/ and the need for greater funding, a more joined-up approach (including better communication and information sharing), and more education inputs.

A key theme concerned a lack of resources/ and the need for greater funding to prevent and tackle ASB, with attention being given to 'budget and resource challenges', there being 'not enough staff in each relevant organisation', and a lack of investment in public services 'to address growing mental health concerns':

"The pressures of volume, complexities involved, budget and resource challenges mean it is increasingly difficult for partners to intervene in any sustainable or meaningful way."
[Housing/ Community Safety Partnership/ ASB Team Respondent]

Certain responses also highlighted that preventing and tackling ASB would benefit from a more joined-up approach, including, better communication and information sharing between agencies: "Continued challenges with systems and data sharing" [Emergency Services Respondent] – although other responses did also suggest that their multi-agency approach was 'well supported' and 'good'. Several responses also indicated the importance of education inputs and activities: "Additional support for education to attend schools and highlight the consequences of this behaviour" [Transport Sector Respondent].

Other responses referenced the need to address poverty and deprivation as underlying or root factors leading to ASB: "Address the underlying cause i.e. poverty" [Housing Sector Respondent]. The role of Under 22 cards/ free travel schemes – particularly around 'clearer guidance on rules' and the 'ability to suspend/ terminate cards/ hotlist cards'; the necessity for increased police presence and tougher/ more robust measures; more analytical support for agencies; and the importance of creating more safe and inclusive places for young people, were also highlighted.

At the conclusion of the survey respondents were given the opportunity to include any final thoughts on ASB. Amongst these responses, lack of funding and resources was again raised as being an important issue: "Police resources are stretched with Community Policing often being the first resource impacted" [Community Safety Partnership/ ASB Team Respondent]. It was also emphasised that improvements could be made to the way ASB data is collected and recorded:

"Regarding data ASB is an umbrella term for many things, perhaps they should be broken down into more meaningful categories such as domestic noise, neighbour dispute, harassment and environmental issues. These would need to be sourced from local authorities, housing providers and police to obtain a full picture from each area. No one agency would have a complete picture for their area." [Community Safety Partnership/ ASB Team Respondent].

The impact made by COVID-19, and the post-pandemic environment, was also raised, with a Transport Sector Respondent commenting that it had: "Notably increased following the pandemic across all age groups." The need for greater clarity around the term ASB

was also identified:

“Clarity on what ASB does not cover is required to remove the extremely low-level complaints - water on windows/ wheelie bins being moved/ people staring at one another/ people taking pictures or videos in public places/ banging doors in communal flats etc.”
[Housing/ Community Safety Partnership/ ASB Team Respondent]

Table 11: How could the ASB Working Group make recommendations that offer supports to your organisation?

Support Required	Response Rate
Training	59
Supporting partnership working	70
A national approach/strategy	78
Guidance	67
Legislation	53
Other	15
<p>Other (specified): resources (2), information, investment in youth work and supporting children and young people, and community inputs.</p>	
<p>Additional Comments: Recommend more resources. A national approach to definitions within ASB would help in data gathering. Each area should still be able to use a service delivery approach that suits their area.</p> <p>To continue to support the Scottish community safety network as a forum for networking and sharing practice.</p> <p>We require clarity on what the legislation covers rather than leaving it with some dubiety – any course of conduct that is causing or is likely to cause. It gives too much room for discretion.</p> <p>Greater enforcement and consequences of actions for offenders.</p> <p>Encourage action on enforcement and prevention, including resources for the police.</p> <p>Linking fines to inflation and better use of alternative disposal methods such as FPNs.</p> <p>Flexibility as all cases are diverse and require different approaches and outcomes.</p> <p>Re-examining the definition which is extremely problematic and currently is “in the eye of the beholder” and seems to justice to them that any behaviour they don’t like or find annoying or socially unacceptable is ASB.</p>	

Other responses also drew attention to the importance of viewing ASB through ‘a children’s rights lens’, as well as the need for a ‘well-balanced approach...primarily via preventative interventions... but not at the expense of the use of appropriate and proportionate enforcement action’. **Table 11** goes on to reveal that a national approach/

strategy was the most requested recommendation, followed by, supporting partnership working, guidance and then training.

Conclusion

The review into existing literature relating to ASB initially revealed the absence of an agreed or consistent definition of ASB, due to both its 'vagueness' and 'subjectivity'. It also demonstrated that policy, legislation and guidance around ASB in Scotland, over recent years, has moved away from 'a narrow focus on enforcement action at all costs' towards one geared more towards 'prevention and early and effective intervention' (Scottish Government, 2009). Despite Scottish data relating to both 'prevalence' and 'perceptions' around ASB providing certain helpful insights, it remains the case that more evidence is required to gain a fuller picture of the impact made by COVID-19. Research carried out into how ASB impacts on victims' shows that challenges remain – such as around reporting. Tensions in how ASB interacts with the rights of children are apparent – particularly around how children engage with 'public spaces'. Studies concerning the underlying factors related to ASB provide a window into some of the possible root causes of ASB, requiring a multi-agency and holistic 'prevention' approach.

The survey findings revealed that ASB was seen mostly as being 'somewhat of a problem' – with qualitative responses going on to identify how instances of ASB can impact on the workforce, on the community, and on commerce. Those aged 12-17 years old were considered to be those carrying out the most ASB, whilst those 26+ years old were seen as those most affected by it. Regarding the main or root cause or causes of ASB in respondents' areas, the most common response was drugs – this was followed by mental health, poverty/inequality, and a lack of resources in the community. Survey findings also indicated that more organisations collect or have data on ASB, than those who do not. The source of the data collected most often originates from the person affected, followed by the local authority, other, and then Police Scotland. Amongst those who provided a response, there was slightly more support for data accurately capturing the true level of ASB in an area, than not doing so, however, it was felt that there is a disconnect between community experiences of ASB and the level of reporting.

The most common barrier to reporting ASB was 'concern nothing will be done', followed by 'concern of retribution/ an escalation', then 'mistrust of authorities'. Regarding approaches to preventing ASB, most qualitative responses converged on the following key themes: the role of multi-agency and partnership working; use of surveillance and monitoring; education inputs; and training. Most respondents went on to identify 'prevention' as the first pillar of priority. The findings also revealed a wide range of additional legislation being used in ASB work. However, despite more respondents finding ASB-related legislation more helpful, than unhelpful, others did not know what the legislation was or what it covered. In terms of ASB Independent Working Group recommendations, a national approach/ strategy, supporting partnership working, guidance, and then training were most requested.

Although there may be no 'one size' fits all remedy to ASB in Scotland (Scottish Community Safety Network & Scottish Government, 2023:5) – and approaches will always

need to account for local dynamics and include the views of individuals and communities – the findings within this report provide an important perspective from a range of key stakeholders, partners and sectors of commerce affected by ASB in Scotland.

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Legislation

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Appendix A: Antisocial Behaviour in Scotland 2024

Survey Questions

Antisocial Behaviour in Scotland 2024

You must provide your consent to complete this survey. Ticking yes below indicates that you have read this information and provide your consent to taking part.

- Yes I consent to taking part in this research
 - No I do not consent to taking part in this research
-

Section 1: About your role and your organisation

What organisation(s) do you work for / are you involved with? Tick all that apply

- Community Planning Partnership
 - Housing
 - Education
 - Police Scotland
 - Health
 - Retail
 - Third Sector
 - Community Safety Partnership/ASB team
 - Cultural, Sports and Leisure Services
 - Transport
 - Fire Service
 - Ambulance Service
 - Social Work
 - Other (please specify)
-

What Local Authority area(s) does your organisation cover? Tick all that apply

- Nationwide
- Aberdeen City Council
- Aberdeenshire Council
- Angus Council
- Argyll and Bute Council
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Clackmannanshire Council
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- Dumfries and Galloway Council
- Dundee City Council
- East Ayrshire Council
- East Dunbartonshire Council
- East Lothian Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Falkirk Council
- Fife Council
- Glasgow City Council
- Inverclyde Council

- Midlothian Council
 - North Ayrshire Council
 - North Lanarkshire Council
 - Orkney Islands Council
 - Perth and Kinross Council
 - Renfrewshire Council
 - Scottish Borders Council
 - Shetland Islands Council
 - South Ayrshire Council
 - South Lanarkshire Council
 - Stirling Council
 - The Highland Council
 - The Moray Council
 - West Dunbartonshire Council
 - West Lothian Council
 - Other
-

Who does your organisation work with? Tick all that apply

- People carrying out ASB
- People experiencing ASB
- Other (please specify)

Section 2 - About Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) in your area

How big an issue is ASB in your area?

- 1 (not a problem at all)
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5 (somewhat of a problem)
 - 6
 - 7
 - 8
 - 9
 - 10 (a very big problem)
-

What is the impact of ASB in your community?

What do you consider the main root cause or causes of ASB in your area? Tick all that apply.

- drugs
- alcohol
- lack of feeling of community/belonging

- lack of resources in the community (e.g. leisure facilities, spaces etc)
- poverty / inequality
- lack of employment/training opportunities
- the condition of the local environment/infrastructure
- mental health
- insufficient support for families
- Other (Please specify)

How old are the people who are carrying out ASB in your area? (Please tick all that apply)

- Under 12
- 12 - 17
- 18-25
- 26 and over

How old are the people who are affected by ASB in your area? (Please tick all that apply)

- Under 12
- 12 - 17
- 18-25
- 26 and over

Thinking about those who are the most involved in ASB, and those who are most affected by ASB in your area, please provide any information you have about other demographics or needs.

- o Those most involved _____
- o Those most affected _____

Please drag and drop in order of the most pressing types of ASB your community/organisation encounters by children under 18 (1 being the most pressing)

- _____ Graffiti
- _____ Vandalism
- _____ Alcohol
- _____ Drugs
- _____ Littering/fly tipping
- _____ Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour
- _____ Noise
- _____ Speeding or antisocial driving
- _____ Other (please specify)
- _____ Other 2 (please specify)

Please drag and drop in order of the most pressing types of ASB your community/organisation encounters by young adults aged 18-25 (1 being the most pressing)

- _____ Graffiti

- Vandalism
 - Alcohol
 - Drugs
 - Littering/fly tipping
 - Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour
 - Noise
 - Speeding or antisocial driving
 - Other (please specify)
 - Other 2 (please specify)
-

Please drag and drop in order of the most pressing types of ASB your community/organisation encounters by adults aged 26 and over (1 being the most pressing)

- Graffiti
- Vandalism
- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Littering/fly tipping
- Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour
- Noise
- Speeding or antisocial driving
- Other (please specify)
- Other 2 (please specify)

Section 3: About the ASB data that is reported and gathered

Does your organisation collect or have data on ASB?

- Yes
 - No
 - Don't Know
-

What is the source of the ASB data collected? Tick all that apply.

- Person affected
 - Community
 - Local Authority
 - Police Scotland
 - Third Sector
 - Other (please specify)
-

Does your data accurately capture the true level of ASB in your area?

- o Yes
 - o Don't know
 - o No
-

Is there a disconnect between how the community experiences ASB and the level of reporting?

- o Yes
 - o Don't know
 - o No
-

If yes, what do you believe are the barriers to reporting ASB? Tick all that apply

- Concern nothing will be done
 - Concern everything that can be done has been done
 - Concern of retribution/an escalation
 - Mistrust of authorities
 - Practical barriers (e.g. language barriers or not knowing how to report etc)
 - Other
-

Section 4: Responses to ASB in your area

How does your organisation try to prevent ASB?

How does your organisation respond to ASB? (Include timeframes, referral to the police or other organisation, eg. internal and external strategies)

What agencies are working with those who carry out ASB in your area?

What agencies are working with those who experience ASB?

Do you believe that the responses in your area are in line with the four pillars of			
	Yes	No	Don't know
Prevention	0	0	0
Intervention	0	0	0
Enforcement	0	0	0
Rehabilitation	0	0	0

How would you rate the four pillars in order of importance? Please drag and drop, with 1 being the most important.

- _____ Prevention
- _____ Intervention
- _____ Enforcement
- _____ Rehabilitation

Are there ways that other agencies could support your organisation to prevent and tackle ASB?

Section 5: National / Strategic Supports and Interventions

The ASB (Scotland) Act 2004 is the broad primary legislation.

If you are using additional legislation in your ASB work please specify which legislation

Do you find legislation relating to ASB helpful or unhelpful in tackling the problem of ASB?

- Helpful
- Unhelpful
- Not sure what the legislation is or what it covers
- Don't know

In what way could the ASB working group make recommendations that offer support to your organisation? Tick all that apply

- Training
 - Supporting partnership working
 - A national approach / strategy
 - Guidance
 - Legislation
 - Other (please specify)
- Is there anything else you would like to share about ASB in your area?
-