



Cleveland Police Putting People First!

# Know the law, know the score!

In the first of a regular new column, **informnorth** have joined forces with **Cleveland Police Force** to offer readers easy explanations on some of the subjects and issues facing officers. In this issue we look at the issues surrounding anti-social behaviour...

**Did you know?** Anti-social behaviour is a term that now seems to hit the headlines on a regular basis, but how much do you understand by the term?

### What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is behaviour which causes alarm, harassment or distress to a member or group in the community.

**What types of anti-social behaviour are there?** The following is not an exhaustive list of behaviours, but are an example some of the more common types of anti-social behaviour people suffer:

- Graffiti and vandalism
- Littering and dumping rubbish
- Misuse of fireworks including using them late at night or in built-up areas
- Shouting or noisy behaviour in places where this might be annoying or upsetting to others, for example outside someone's house
- Using rude, abusive or insulting language
- Threatening behaviour or bullying - including on the internet, mobile phones or using other electronic media
- Upsetting someone by being racist or homophobic towards them
- Uncontrolled or dangerous dogs
- Assault and/or theft
- Joyriding or using vehicles in an anti social manner (for example blocking access, noisy radios, wheel spinning)
- Excessively drinking alcohol, alcohol related trouble or buying and selling drugs in the street

### What is the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003?

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 is an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which applies only to England and Wales. The Act called Respect and Responsibility - taking a stand against anti-social behaviour focuses on providing local authorities and the police with a wider, more flexible range of powers to meet their existing responsibilities and respond to the needs of their local communities. It was championed by the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett and was passed in 2003.

As well as strengthening the anti-social behaviour order and Fixed Penalty Notice

provisions, it bans spray paint sales to people under the age of 16 and gives local councils the power to order the removal of graffiti from private property.

It also specifically addresses truancy, crack houses, fireworks, public drunkenness, gang activity and false reports of an emergency.

**Why or who would get involved in anti-social behaviour?** Nobody other than the person who carries out anti-social behaviour will really know why they do it, but there some reasons individuals or groups of people might get involved include:

- Issues and problems at home
- Truancy or exclusion from school
- Bad behaviour that hasn't previously been identified or challenged
- A general disrespect for the community
- Living or being around others who are anti-social and influenced by them

**What is an ASBO?** An Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) is an agreement between a person or persons who have committed acts of anti-social behaviour and the police.

These orders act as a legal and binding contract signed by all parties concerned



so they will reduce the chances of the individual in receipt of the ASBO from causing any further acts of anti-social behaviour.

Some anti-social behaviour, such as selling drugs, is a crime punishable by the law. Each case will be treated individually and whilst the new Home Secretary is intent on removing ASBOs, if you are arrested, you might be sentenced in court for a crime, but at present you might also receive an ASBO.

**For general advice contact the Public Service Desk on 01642 301 207**



## Anti-social behaviour

**ASBOs were first introduced in England, Scotland and Wales by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, but did you know the following?**

- An ASBO is an Order of the Court which tells an individual aged over 10 how they must not behave
- The first ever ASBO was given to offender Kat Richards for repeated drunk and disorderly behaviour
- The oldest recipient of an ASBO, was an 87-year-old man who was abusive to his neighbours
- The first farmer to be given an ASBO was instructed to keep his geese and pigs from damaging his neighbour's property
- Between May 2000 and 2008, Cleveland Police had issued 312 ASBOS (Source: homeoffice.gov.uk)
- 272 of recipients were male and 40 female (Source: homeoffice.gov.uk)

- In total England and Wales have issued a total 16,999 ASBOs (Source: homeoffice.gov.uk)
- In 2007, David Blunkett admitted that ASBOs were not actually working and that some youngsters viewed them as a "badge of honour".
- Hartlepool mayor Stuart Drummond said that he believed ASBOs have benefited the town saying "I think the majority have been successful."
- In 2010 Ministry of Justice figures showed 55 per cent of 17,000 ASBOs that had been issued nationally between June 2000 and December 2008 were breached. This led to an immediate custodial sentence in more than half of all the cases.
- In April 2010, the BBC reported widely that MPS has passed new legislation which allowed dogs to be given ASBOs in an effort to strike at their owners.