

REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY

1st PROGRESS REPORT – FEBRUARY/MARCH 2008

Introduction

Welcome to the first progress report on the review of the national antisocial behaviour strategy. Launched in October 2007 with the publication of the [Terms of Reference](#), the review is due to report to Parliament by the end of 2008. As this is the first progress report, we have included detailed background information. Future editions will be more succinct and assume a degree of background knowledge.

The purpose of these updates, which we intend to publish monthly, is to ensure that dialogue is maintained with stakeholders throughout the review, rather than being concentrated around key consultation points. We hope that this will ensure stakeholders are kept engaged, informed of review activity as it happens and encouraged to raise questions or feed in views and ideas as appropriate. If you have any views on the review or this progress report, please inform us – contact details are provided at the end of the report.

Terms of Reference and scope of the review

As mentioned above, the Terms of Reference for the review were published in October 2007. These outline eight key objectives. A copy can be found on our [website](#), further details about which follow later in this report.

Following the planning phase of the review, detailed information about the review's scope and process was released on 27 February. It was made available in a [news release](#), in response to a [parliamentary question](#) and in a letter to the Parliament's Justice Committee. It set out the work planned under each of the eight objectives in the Terms of Reference, including plans for an external advisory group, consultation, project roles, and the review timetable and output.

The Review Project Team

The Minister responsible for the review is Fergus Ewing MSP, Minister for Community Safety. Cabinet will clear the final output. Alan Johnston, Deputy Director for Drugs and Community Safety, is the Senior Responsible Officer and the review will be led by the Community Safety Unit, which is headed up by Richard Foggo. The Project Manager for the review is Duncan Beamish, who will be supported by John Brownlie and Chrissie Finnigan. Expert advice will be provided by our National Antisocial Behaviour Coordinators, Mark McCall and Trish Pryce, and research for the review will be led on by Dr Liz Levy of our Justice Analytical Services Division. Communications support will be provided by John McCroskie and Russell Fallis of Communications Justice. In addition, COSLA has agreed to second Mike Callaghan into the project team for two days per week during the course of the review. Mike, who will start in April, will lead on the community engagement strand.

Internal Steering Group

An internal Steering Group for the review has been established, which draws together key policy-leads from across the Scottish Government, including youth justice, early years framework, young people, noise nuisance, drugs, alcohol, social inclusion and poverty, children's rights, victims and witnesses, community justice, community regeneration and communications and marketing. The group met for the first time on 25 February to discuss the content and direction of the review and will meet twice more during the course of the review (June and September). The group will also be involved through Advisory Group sub-groups, as described below.

External Advisory Group

A high-level expert advisory group made up of local authority leaders, senior police and other criminal justice professionals has been established to help steer the review. This group will have a key role as it will be asked to agree the final recommendations of the review. The following bodies are represented: Scottish Government; Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland; Convention of Scottish Local Authorities; Society of Local Authority Chief Executives & Senior Managers; Scottish Children's Reporter Administration; Chief Fire Officers' Association Scotland; Safeguarding Communities, Reducing Offending (SACRO); Judicial Studies Committee; Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University; YouthLink Scotland; NCH Scotland; Victim Support Scotland; Scottish Youth Parliament; Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service.

The group met for the first time on 27 February and discussed its role and the key themes for the review. The minutes of that meeting and all future meetings will be published on our website. Four key themes around which there was a strong degree of consensus emerged at the first meeting. As a result, we plan to establish a sub-group on each of these themes: the balance between prevention, intervention, enforcement and rehabilitation; community engagement; integrated service provision; and media and communications. We propose that each of these groups should meet twice during the review (in between Advisory Group meetings) and each should host one practitioners' good practice workshop. Attendees would be drawn from the main Advisory Group and include policy-leads from across Government.

We wrote to members of the advisory group on 5 March to provide draft minutes of the first meeting for agreement and a correct record of the minutes was agreed on 14 March. We wrote again to the advisory group on 20 March to set out our proposals for the sub-groups and feedback from members is due by 4 April. The next meeting of the Advisory Group will take place on 25 June and the final meeting will be on 17 September. We expect meetings of the sub-groups to be held in April and August, and the workshops to be held early summer.

Consultation

Our plans for consultation during the course of review are set out in the response to the [parliamentary question](#) from Nigel Don MSP and in the letter to the Justice Committee. In summary, we plan a multi-layered approach. In addition to the internal Steering Group and external Advisory Group discussed above, we plan to engage directly with practitioners through their representative bodies, namely, the Antisocial Behaviour Officers' Forum (ASBOF), the Antisocial Behaviour Lawyers Forum (ASBLF), the Scottish Community Safety Network (SCSN) and the Community Wardens' Network (CWN).

Alan Johnston gave a presentation and took questions on the review at a practitioner conference organised by White Paper Conferences, at the Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh on 29 January. Trish Pryce spoke to ASBLF about the review at their last meeting, in Aberdeen on 12 February and Mark McCall and Duncan Beamish presented to the last SCSN meeting on 13 February, also in Aberdeen. Mark McCall similarly presented to ASBOF at their last meeting, in Stirling on 20 February, and a discussion was also held on the review at the National Community Safety Convention in Aviemore on 10-11 March. Further to this, special consultation events are planned to be held by ASBLF and ASBOF on the review on 23 April in Dundee and 30 April in Glasgow respectively. There will be input provided to these meetings by the Review Project Team.

We do not plan to hold a formal three-month written consultation exercise. Instead, we plan to engage with members of the public through a series of focus groups, including one with young people. These are expected to be held in spring/early summer and further information about these will be provided in the next progress report. In addition, Mr Ewing is keen to meet practitioners and the public during the course of the review and we will be arranging visits with various agencies and hosting a number of public forums, the majority of which will be timed to coincide with the Ministerial summer tours season during July and August.

Finally, our researcher Dr Liz Levy is conducting in-depth interviews with agencies across Scotland to learn about practitioners' views about the use and effectiveness of key measures in the 2004 Act. Further information about these and other research work is provided below.

Research

The Analytical Work to Support the Review

The Review will draw on the considerable body of research already published by the Scottish Government on the measures used to address antisocial behaviour including:

- Evaluation of dispersal orders
(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/10/24134057/0>);
- Evaluation of noise nuisance services
(<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/10/24132337/0>);

- Research on the Use of Antisocial Behaviour Orders (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/19160705/0>);
- Evaluation of ASB Strategies in Selected Scottish Neighbourhood (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/10/18103711/0>).
- National Evaluation of community wardens (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/03/22104147/0>)

An Evaluation of Intensive Family Support Projects is also currently underway and is due to be published towards the end of 2008. The key messages from this work will be fed to the review in time for them to influence its recommendations.

There is also some in-house research underway on ASBO breach rate and the courts' response to breach, and Justice Analytical Services have been interviewing each of Scotland's police forces and selected local authorities about their experiences of and views on some of the antisocial behaviour measures. The measures discussed includes dispersal orders; closure orders; vehicle seizures; Fixed Penalty Notices (to a limited extent), acceptable behaviour contracts; mediation; other forms of early intervention; and antisocial behaviour orders. The findings from both these pieces of work will be published alongside the recommendations from the review.

To assist consultation with key stakeholders in determining future priorities, Justice Analytical Services will also be commissioning some focus groups with the general public. These will be used to explore how perceptions and experiences of antisocial behaviour and satisfaction with agency response could be improved. The plan is to run separate groups with adults and young people. There are questions about experience of neighbourhood problems in the Scottish Household Survey (the relevant results can be found on our website at www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/08/01084217/28-2) and we plan to re-approach some of those who responded to explore their views on more detail via the focus groups. Because respondents to the SHS are adults, we are currently considering how best to recruit a sample of young people for focus group work. Again the results of this work will be published alongside the review's recommendations.

Developments relevant to the review

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr Ewing is keen to see future development of police Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for antisocial behaviour considered as part of the review. National roll-out of FPNs was completed in September 2007 when Strathclyde went live. An evaluation of the use of FPNs is planned for September 2008, one year after national implementation, to help us determine how successful the scheme has been and whether the offences included are appropriate. While the results of this evaluation will not be delivered early enough to influence the review's recommendations, we will use the review to design the evaluation and to consider a number of other issues relevant to future development of the scheme.

One of these issues is the roll-out of FPNs to the British Transport Police and the Ministry of Defence Police and we have been liaising with both forces about this. Work is progressing on this front and the Scottish Government has agreed to provide funding to both forces to enable them to upgrade their IT systems as required for processing tickets and meeting Summary Justice Reform data standards. Other issues that will be considered to some extent include cross-border enforcement, rationalisation with other FPN schemes and the inclusion of additional offences.

High Hedges

The issue of high hedges is something that is regularly raised with MSPs and Ministers. While it is not technically part of the review, the review will consider services relevant to high hedge disputes, such as mediation. Furthermore, we have committed to announce – by the time the antisocial behaviour strategy reports – how the Government intends to support the provision of a suitable means of last resort to resolve disputes in which all other means have been exhausted. We are currently investigating the options available to Government with a view to putting advice to the Minister for Community Safety in due course.

Communication

We have established a page on our website dedicated to the review where we intend to publish documents and provide updates and notification of consultation events. The page can be found at www.antisocialbehavioursotland.com/review. In addition, we are preparing an interactive section of the site for members of the external Advisory Group and an Intranet page for the internal Steering Group. We will continue to publish these monthly progress reports and make available the minutes of all Advisory Group meetings and any research undertaken as part of the review.

Review output

Further information about the review output was provided in the answer to Nigel Don's [parliamentary question](#) and the letter to the Justice Committee. In essence, we will be publishing a set of recommendations for Government and partners, a route-map outlining how these recommendations will be implemented, a short report providing the rationale for the recommendations and a package of research which has supported the review.

Contact Details

If you have any queries about the review you can telephone the Community Safety Unit on 0131 244 4946 or email christine.finnigan@scotland.gsi.gov.uk.

Scottish Government
Community Safety Unit
ASB Review Project Team
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