

Appendix to Children's Services Report on Activity to Support Requirements under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Case Study

A small residential street, situated less than a mile from the town centre of Dudley and which, during 2008 and the first half of 2009, was regarded as a major hot spot for anti-social behaviour for over a year. In terms of the sustained intensity of the issues presented, it was probably the most serious episode within the Borough for a number of years.

The problem centred around three large inter-related families. These families were notoriously suspicious of the authorities, and for long periods difficult to engage with. All of the families lived in privately rented accommodation.

In response to this, there were several inter-agency meetings jointly co-ordinated by Community Safety and Community Renewal, where an overall strategy was developed, containing several key prongs. This saw a number of key actions initiated in which Children's Services were prominent.

Enforcement activity was combined with family and parenting intervention, particularly through the YOS and Connexions. Significant breakthroughs occurred with the adoption of the Common Assessment Framework by one family. Developing diversionary activities was a key element, most particularly for those young people who had been victims, and also for members of the families (the girls especially) who had not been involved in ASB and indeed who had distanced themselves from the behaviour of some of their siblings. This was important in reassuring the local community that their needs were taken seriously and in pro-actively countering any perceptions that intervention was about giving attention to those who had behaved badly. It was one of three areas within the borough prioritised for focussed preventative youth work by the multi-agency Positive Activities for Young People (PAYP) during the winter and spring of 2008- 2009.

One family relocated away from the region, another was evicted by the landlord, and the other (at the centre of the troubles) remained in contact with the agencies and significantly improved their behaviour. By autumn 2009, local residents were reporting that the atmosphere on the street had improved to the point that it was happily reminiscent of the pre-2007 period.

This experience helped partners, including Children's Services, to improve systems for early identification and to prove that prompt effective early intervention is vital to prevent similar scenarios recurring across the Borough.