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# Responding to Young People's Involvement in Anti-Social Behaviour: A Study of Local Initiatives in Manchester and Glasgow

Hannah Smithson and John Flint

*Much current policy and media debates about anti-social behaviour in the UK have focused upon the presence and activities of groups of young people in residential spaces. Recent legislation has introduced new mechanisms for regulating the conduct of young people in public spaces, including anti-social behaviour orders, curfew orders and dispersal orders. This article provides a comparative evaluation of two local initiatives specifically aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour amongst groups of young people. The first initiative comprised the operation of a dispersal order scheme in an area of East Manchester. The second initiative involved a social landlord funding additional police patrols in a local neighbourhood in Glasgow. The article explores the rationale and operation of both these initiatives and the roles and responsibilities for different agency and community actors. It continues by identifying the outcomes of the initiatives on levels of anti-social behaviour and the wider impacts on community relations and exploring the perceptions of housing and police officers, adult residents and young people themselves.*

**Keywords:** *Anti-social behaviour Act (2003), dispersal orders, community policing and young people*

Since 1998, when the Crime and Disorder Act introduced Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), tackling anti-social behaviour has been a key priority for the New Labour government in the UK. The Anti-social Behaviour Unit was established in the Home Office in January 2003 to co-ordinate the national TOGETHER action plan to address anti-social behaviour in the worst affected local authority areas. The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 created new measures for dealing with anti-social behaviour including, Parenting Orders, Dispersal Orders, powers to close down crack houses, restrictions on selling spray paints to under 16s, restrictions on the misuse of fireworks and new powers for local authorities to deal with litter, graffiti and fly tipping. In 2005, the Respect Task Force was established in the Home Office and in January 2006 published an Action Plan outlining a series of proposals to take the Respect agenda 'broader, deeper and further' (Respect Task Force, 2006).

In addition to these powers, a number of bodies have been created to enforce and co-ordinate the Government's anti-social behaviour agenda. Community Support Officers (CSOs), Street Wardens and Neighbourhood Wardens form part of the 'virtual policing family' with the powers to enforce ASB policy.

A number of commentators have highlighted how new mechanisms such as ASBOs (often accompanied by 'naming and shaming' publicity strategies) and Dispersal Orders have been particularly targeted on young people (Squires and Steven, 2005; Scraton, 2005). These new mechanisms to regulate the conduct of young people both represent challenges to the legal rights and welfare assumptions provided to young people in the UK (Cleland and Tisdall, 2005; Scraton, 2005) and illustrate how an 'institutionalised mistrust of youth' (Kelly, 2003) has had a particular manifestation in governance rationales and techniques in city centres and residential neighbourhoods that seek to disperse and marginalise young people from public spaces (Rogers and Coaffee, 2005).

The research upon which this article is based provides a comparative evaluation of two local initiatives specifically aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour amongst groups of young people in public spaces: a dispersal order implemented in Manchester and a social-landlord funded additional policing initiative in the east end of Glasgow. Within the article we seek to examine the rationales and operation of the initiatives and evaluate their impacts on anti-social behaviour. In addition, we also explore the perceptions of public agency officers, and young people with respect to the above.<sup>1</sup>

## **Young People and Anti-Social Behaviour – Policy and Practice Responses**

In the UK anti-social behaviour policies have been characterised by a conflating of problematic behaviour in local communities with the activities of young people. Bland and Read (2000) found that the police frequently view anti-social behaviour as a problem relating to young people. Millie et al (2005) found that the general public also associates problems of anti-social behaviour with young people, for example, graffiti, drug use and rowdiness.

The British Crime Survey (BCS) 2002/2003 found that 33 per cent of respondents viewed 'teenagers hanging around' as a 'very or fairly big problem'. (Nicholas and Walker, 2004). The 2003/2004 BCS found that overall, this had dropped to 27 per cent (Thorpe and Wood, 2004). This has made little difference to the government's agenda as young people remain the target of much anti-social behaviour legislation (Burney, 2005).

Policy responses have increased the formal control of young people through new legal mechanisms, such as ASBOs, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and dispersal orders, for regulating their behaviour and increasing the visibility of official authority. Policy seeks to reduce anti-social behaviour by restricting the movement and association of young people and the imposition of fines or other sanctions on young people or their families. Parenting Orders and parent contracts with schools have reconfigured the distribution of rights and responsibilities for the conduct of children between parents, local communities and the state, with parents increasingly held accountable and subject to sanctions for the behaviour of their children, based around the impact of conduct on 'local communities' (Cleland and Tisdall, 2005).

It is argued that many anti-social behaviour measures represent an intensive monitoring and regulation of young peoples' lives (James and James, 2001) as the welfare-orientation of youth policy has become increasingly punitive (Grier and Thomas, 2003; Cleland and Tisdall, 2005). This has involved the problematisation and criminalisation of previously non-criminal activities by young people. Young peoples' citizenship rights have been curtailed through the use of ASBOs prohibiting the wearing of certain clothes or association with friends and the use of ASBOs, dispersal and curfew orders (and exclusion orders in private shopping centres) to prohibit young people's access to and use of public spaces (Goldson, 2002; James and James, 2001; Jeffs, 1997).

The 2003 Crime and Justice Survey (Hayward and Sharp, 2005) provided evidence of the extent of 10-25 year olds' involvement in anti-social behaviour. It found that 29 per cent of young people had committed at least one act of anti-social behaviour in the previous year. The most common was causing 'public disturbance' (15 per cent), followed by causing 'neighbour complaints' (13 per cent). When these figures are presented along side the number of young people who have been for example, the recipients of ASBOs, it highlights the increasingly punitive approach of dealing with young people's behaviour. From June 2000 to the end of September 2004, 991 ASBOs were imposed amongst 10-17 year olds. This represents 52 per cent of the total in that period. (Youth Justice Board, 2005). Recent figures show that 43 per cent of all ASBOs were issued to juveniles from April 1999 to September 2005 ([www.crimereduction.gov.uk/asbos2.htm](http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/asbos2.htm)). Furthermore, the government is currently considering the introduction of 'baby ASBOs' which could apply to under 10s (The *Guardian* 2005).

## **Overview of the Two Approaches – Dispersal Orders and Community Policing**

### **The Dispersal Order**

Dispersal Orders were introduced in sections 30-36 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003; and provide the police, working jointly with local authorities, new powers to disperse groups (two or more people) in a designated area (for a period of up to 24 hours) which has previously been the site of anti-social behaviour, if delegated officers have reasonable grounds for believing that the presence or behaviour of a group has resulted in, or is likely to result in, a member of the public being harassed, intimidated, alarmed or distressed. The orders can be granted for a period of up to six months which is renewable.

In addition to powers of group dispersal, when first introduced, there was also a curfew element. Young people under the age of 16 found unsupervised on the streets within a designated area between the hours of 9pm and 6am could be taken home by the police unless there were reasonable grounds for believing that this would cause the young person significant harm. However, this curfew element has been subject to a successful legal challenge, resulting in a High Court ruling that it is illegal for police officers to forcibly escort a young person to their home ([www.liberty.org.uk](http://www.liberty.org.uk)). Home Office figures show that dispersal orders have been used extensively as 418 were implemented between January 2004 and September 2004 ([www.together.gov.uk](http://www.together.gov.uk)).

The creation of the dispersal order has re-ignited the debate surrounding the use of curfew powers to prevent anti-social behaviour by young people. As Walsh (2002) notes, the potential for introducing blanket curfews in the UK for under 10s was provided by sections 14 and 15 of the CDA 1998. Local authorities made little use of this power, until the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (CJPPA, 2001) extended the age range to include under 16s and the local chief officer of police alongside the local authority were given the powers to implement curfew schemes. Even though the curfew element of dispersal powers has been overturned, it is important to highlight the critical analyses which have been offered regarding the desirability of such a power, as the findings from Manchester demonstrate that the curfew was the cause of most of the antagonism towards the implementation of the order.

Jeffs and Smith (1996:6) suggest that curfews are characteristically justified for the following reasons:

- They protect juveniles from becoming victims of crime
- Reduce the likelihood that juveniles will engage in criminal activity
- Assist parents in carrying out their responsibility to supervise their children

In terms of the effectiveness of curfews the evidence is unclear, and Jeffs and Smith (1996) promote caution. The American experience suggests that they might have a short-term effect on reducing levels of crime but in the long-term they are less effective. A review by Bannerjee (1994) found that Baltimore had the double national average of juvenile arrests for assault despite having had a curfew for nearly twenty years.

Curfews have been criticised on a number of levels, Walsh (2002) and Jeffs and Smith (1996) both provide a detailed account of these critiques. They cite age discrimination, the criminalisation of previously non-criminal behaviour, oppressive state control, increasing a moral panic about the behaviour of young people and creating hostile relations between young people and the police as the most fundamental concerns.

### **Community Policing**

The enhanced visibility of an official authority presence in residential areas in the UK has been achieved through increasing the police presence in communities, with record numbers of police officers (now over 140,000) supported by community support officers, envisaged to number 24,000 by 2008; and through new neighbourhood policing models that maximise police visibility in order to provide reassurance to local residents (Home Office, 2004; HMIC, 2003). There is a growing pluralisation of policing functions in residential areas arising from visible patrol activities undertaken by the police, neighbourhood wardens and private security personnel (Crawford et al., 2005). This mixed economy of security provision has resulted in a diverse network of funding and contractual relationships in which additional visible patrols operational in specified locations are purchased by a growing range of organisations and resident groups (Crawford et al, 2005; Crawford et al, 2003; Crawford, 2003; Loader, 2000). As housing management has become increasingly implicated within the governance of anti-social behaviour (Brown, 2004) social landlords are also purchasing additional contracted policing services from public police forces, often in response to the perceived anti-social behaviour of young people in public spaces in residential areas. One

such initiative in Glasgow is described in this article. The use of additional public policing resources by social landlords has been subject to criticism both on operational and efficiency grounds and also by arguments highlighting the potential displacement of social problems, the adequateness of accountability mechanisms and the growing inequality of security provision and community safety levels between neighbourhoods within an increasingly fragmented geography of housing and urban governance and policing arrangements (Crawford et al., 2005; Loader, 2000).

## The Research Studies

### The Manchester Study

The research undertaken in Manchester was part of the wider national evaluation of the New Deal for Communities (NDC) crime theme. NDC is a government programme which aims to tackle multiple deprivation in some of the most deprived areas within the UK. Attention is paid to five key themes: health, education, employment, housing and crime. For the purposes of confidentiality and anonymity the NDC area is referred to only as the Manchester Partnership.

The research was carried out over a three month period from September 2004 until January 2005. Its aims were to: provide an overview of the processes involved in implementing a dispersal order; illustrate NDC practitioners' and police officers' experience of implementing and enforcing the order's powers and provide young people's views and experience of the order. (see Smithson, 2005 for a full review of methods).

A range of methods were used to undertake the research: semi-structured in depth-interviews were undertaken with the Community Safety Manager and the Youth Intervention Officer from the Manchester NDC Partnership; five in-depth semi-structured interviews and two focus groups were undertaken with young people (aged 14-16) living in the designated dispersal area, this involved a total of 23 young people; police officers and NDC staff were observed patrolling the dispersal area and enforcing the order; observation of four dispersal order panels used by police officers to speak with the parents of young children who were not adhering to the requirements of the order; and an analysis of police data collected on calls made regarding juvenile nuisance from 2001-2004.

Interviews and focus groups with young people were undertaken at the local Youth Offending Team (YOT) office, a room at a local youth diversionary project and a local secondary school. The sample of young people included only one female. They had experienced varying levels of contact with the police as a result of the powers imposed by the dispersal order. For example, one of them had been arrested and taken to court due to continuously breaching the curfew requirements, some had been dispersed, whilst the majority of others only had experience of the police warning them to return home prior to the curfew commencing at 21:00 each night.

The researcher accompanied police officers and NDC staff patrolling the dispersal area and enforcing the order on one occasion. This involved travelling in the allocated police van to observe how the order was enforced. It also allowed the researcher to discuss the

implications of the order with the officers. The local area police team collated figures on calls made to service regarding youth nuisance from 2001-2004 and granted the researcher access to these figures.

### **The Glasgow Study**

The Reidvale Community Policing Initiative began in April 2004, involving a partnership between Reidvale Housing Association and Strathclyde Police whereby the housing association funded overtime payments to police officers to undertake 16 hours of additional high visibility patrols in a small designated area where the association's stock was located. The initiative was funded as a 12-month pilot but has continued since April 2005.

The evaluation of the Reidvale initiative included a stratified random household survey of 181 Reidvale Housing Association tenants living in the area subject to the policing initiative. This represents approximately 15 percent of the total Reidvale housing stock in the area, and the sample was stratified to be representative of the gender, age and housing type profiles of the area. Two waves of the survey were conducted. The first was undertaken in April 2004, just after the policing initiative has commenced and the second in April 2005, 12 months into the initiative. In addition focus groups were held with adult tenants (5) and young people (5) in April 2004 and a focus group was also held with adult tenants (6) in April 2005. Interviews were conducted with Reidvale housing officers, Strathclyde Police community police officers and a youth worker at a youth facility within Reidvale in both April 2004 and April 2005.

The evaluation also involved analysis of data provided by Strathclyde Police. This included Command and Control information, for all reported complaints to the police relating to anti-social behaviour within the study area, supplemented by additional anti-social behaviour incidence data provided by Strathclyde Police for Reidvale and three adjacent neighbourhoods. Records of complaints about anti-social behaviour and incidences of vandalism kept by Reidvale Housing Association were analysed. Finally, patrol incident report sheets completed by police officers undertaking the additional patrols were evaluated (for a full discussion about the research methodology, and its limitations, see Flint and Kearns, 2005).

## **The Initiatives in Operation**

### **Manchester's Experience**

A MORI survey carried out in 2004 as part of the NDC national evaluation found that 45 per cent of residents from the Manchester Partnership responded that teenagers hanging around on the streets was a serious problem in the area. Figures provided by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) demonstrate that between April 2002 – March 2003 and April 2003 – March 2004 there was an increase in the reporting of youth nuisance related incidents in the designated dispersal area. The police did acknowledge that the increase could be a result of residents becoming more willing to report youth nuisance.

**Table 1: Number of Calls made to Police regarding Youth Nuisance from April 2002-March 2003 and April 2003 – March 2004.**

Year	2002/2003	2003/2004	% Change	Number of victims
<b>Designated Dispersal Area</b>	628	725	+15	+97

The decision to implement the dispersal order was driven by the Community Safety Manager from the NDC Partnership and was presented to the local police and the city council as a means to tackle anti-social behaviour amongst young people. The decision was explained in the following way:

*Young people on these estates have had a free rein in terms of been able to do what they want when they want and cause distress to good residents, good people. Measures like this give a certain amount of safety to people who respect the law and want to be part of the community. (NDC Youth Intervention Officer YIO)*

The order was implemented for a period of three months between 20 September 2004 and 10 January 2005. The local area police team wrote a report for the divisional Chief Superintendent stating the case for requiring the order, which included figures for calls made by residents in relation to youth nuisance and 500 signatures from residents in support of the order. The order was 'jointly managed' by the police and NDC practitioners, with both organisations supplying additional resources to establish enforcement procedures. These resources included providing police transport and police overtime, whilst the NDC's YIO accompanied police officers on area patrols in order to assist them in dealing with young people appropriately. Box 1 below illustrates the steps involved in policing and enforcing the order.

#### **Box 1: Steps involved in policing and enforcing the Dispersal Order**

- Two officers patrolled the designated area in a police vehicle from 7pm to 1am. If young people were on the streets they were reminded that the curfew commenced at 9pm for those under the age of 16.
- It was at the officer's discretion whether young people in groups of two or more were dispersed.
- From 9pm onwards details could be taken of those young people still on the streets. Those under the age of 16 were told to go home. It was at the officer's discretion as to whether or not they accompanied a young person home.
- A young person who had been dispersed and had returned to the area within a 24 hour period could be arrested, at the discretion of the officer.
- If a young person under the age of 16 continuously breached the order their parents were asked to attend a multi-agency dispersal order panel, facilitated by police officers and NDC practitioners to provide parents with information and guidance about the order.

According to police and NDC practitioners, the policing of the order resulted in young people being stopped and spoken to without necessarily being dispersed or taken home. Police officers firstly warned young people that the curfew began at 9pm and would recommend that they returned home by that time. On the occasion that the researcher observed the policing procedure the above approach was adopted. It became evident during the course of the research that the procedures lacked consistency. On occasions, liveried police vehicles were not available and unmarked vehicles had to be used, and additional officers were not always available due to other commitments in the area. The lack of a specifically allocated pool of officers led to inconsistency in policing the order, arising from the reliance upon individual officers' discretion.

During the three month period, 277 young people were stopped and 177 young people were dispersed. 96 young people aged under 16 were escorted home. A total of three arrests were made throughout the duration of the order. Dispersal Order Panels were set up by the police to meet with the parents of the young people who had breached the 9pm curfew three times or more. Parents were requested to attend the police station with their child. The police gave advice and warnings about actions that may follow if the curfew was not adhered to. These included issuing ABCs and potentially ASBOs, and parents were also advised that they could lose their tenancies.

Manchester's experience demonstrates the problems attached to policing and enforcing the order. It clearly creates an increased surveillance of young people and their families (Burney, 2005). Three under 16s were arrested as a result of not adhering to the curfew requirements which serves to strengthen the argument that New Labour's anti-social behaviour agenda is increasingly punitive and serves to criminalise previously non-criminal behaviour (Goldson, 2002). Manchester's decision to use dispersal panels as a threat for parents also serves to reinforce the notion that parents are increasingly held accountable and subject to sanctions for the behaviour of their children (Cleland and Tisdall, 2005).

### **Glasgow's Experience**

The Reidvale Community Policing initiative occurred in response to growing concerns about serious youth disorder in the area and the inadequacy of a local police presence. The additional police patrols were specifically targeted at young people's activities. However, although the principle objectives of the scheme were to reduce anti-social behaviour and to increase residents' feelings of safety and confidence in the police, it was also recognised that improving relations between young people and adults and fostering tolerance was an important element of enhancing a sense of community locally, and the initiative was linked to the provision of youth facilities (including a youth shelter) and the promotion of an awards scheme for young people.

The initiative operated through the funding of overtime payments to police officers to undertake 16 hours of additional patrolling activity in a designated area of a few streets. Two officers jointly patrolled between 6pm and 10pm on two designated evenings each week. A total of 91 patrols were conducted between April 2004 and 31 March 2005, amounting to 364 additional police hours, with over a third of patrols conducted on Friday evenings. The timings of the patrols were negotiated between the police and housing association, and the housing association gave the police specific instructions about

particular streets or premises to focus on. Unlike the Manchester initiative, additional patrolling activity was almost always delivered, with less than 20 hours of police coverage being lost due to cancelled patrols or officers being called out within the designated patrol area. A total of 65 police officers undertook the patrols, although a quarter were conducted by a core of eight community police officers. The police provided Reidvale Housing Association with detailed report forms for each patrol and a weekly record of complaints received about anti-social behaviour. The majority of patrol activity involved walking or cycling the streets with some visits to youth facilities, commercial premises and residential properties. During the additional patrols 115 stop and searches were carried out, 18 arrests were made and on a third of patrols groups of young people were dispersed. The concentrated nature of the Housing Association stock and the designated area meant that a police presence and visibility increased significantly, as a police officer described:

*Sometimes on one additional patrol night we will be in a street five or ten times... whereas on normal shifts we may be lucky to be in that street once.*

The residents surveys showed a 28 percent increase (to 82 percent) in the 12 months of the initiative in the proportion of residents who had seen a community police officer and a 21 percent increase (to 29 percent) in the proportion of residents who had spoken to a community police officer. However, only two thirds of respondents were aware of the policing initiative and only a third of residents reported perceiving an increase in police presence in the locality during the 12 months of the initiative (although this was a 21 percent increase on the previous 12 months).

## **The Impacts of the Initiatives**

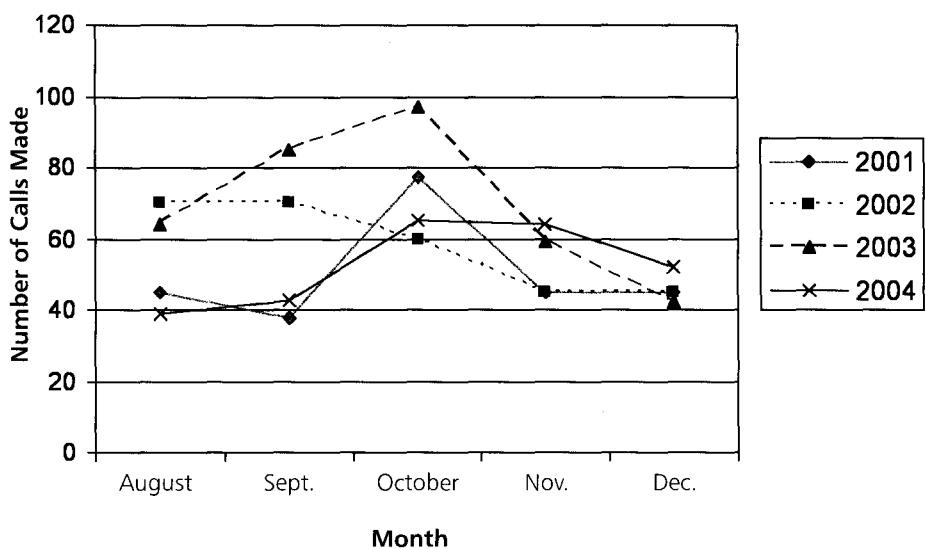
### **a) Reducing Anti-social Behaviour Involving Young People**

Although New Labour has lost little time in creating a whole new raft of legislation to tackle what it sees as 'behaviour that makes other people's lives a misery', little work has been carried out to measure the effectiveness and impacts of this legislation. Dispersal orders are a prime example of this neglect. Efforts to locate data and information regarding the number of orders implemented since their creation proved difficult. Unlike ASBOs, the numbers of dispersal orders implemented and broken down by police area are not readily available from the Home Office. Evidence of impacts and effectiveness does not exist in any format other than brief examples on the government's crime reduction web site.

GMP figures for calls made by residents regarding juvenile nuisance in the designated dispersal area were obtained for August to December 2001–2004.

Chart 1 illustrates that calls fluctuated over the three year period, although 2003 experienced higher figures compared with other years. The chart provides evidence of a 'seasonal spike' occurring in the month of October, which police officers and NDC staff attributed to the misuse of fireworks. Comparing the 12 month period of January 2003 to January 2004, figures for 2004 are lower throughout the year until November and December when there is an increased percentage change. The difficulty with comparing 2003/2004 figures is that 2003 saw an exceptionally high numbers of calls being made compared with other years.

**Chart 1: Calls Made Regarding Juvenile Nuisance  
Between August to December 2001–2004**



**Table 2 Number of Calls Made Regarding Youth Nuisance in the designated dispersal area: January 2003 to January 2004**

Number of calls made regarding youth nuisance	2003	2004	Percentage Change
January	39	48	+9
February	68	54	-14
March	59	40	-19
April	53	42	-11
May	59	42	-17
June	60	44	-16
July	64	36	-28
August	64	36	-28
<b>September</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>-42</b>
<b>October</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>-32</b>
<b>November</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>+5</b>
<b>December</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>+10</b>

Source: GMP

The figures provided for August-December 2004 demonstrate that prior to the order's inception, 2004 figures were amongst the lowest over the three year period. Conversely, figures for 2004 were highest whilst it was in place. One explanation is that the order could have raised residents' expectations and willingness to contact the police whilst simultaneously reducing their tolerance of youth nuisance. Unfortunately, figures for January 2005 and beyond were not made available. As a result, it is not possible to comment on long-term effects of the order. The figures are therefore inconclusive about its impact.

### **The Reidvale Initiative**

A range of evidence suggests that the policing initiative led to a considerable reduction in anti-social behaviour and street disorder involving young people in the Reidvale area. Table 3 shows the number of complaints received by Strathclyde Police about anti-social behaviour in the Reidvale area during the 12 months of the policing initiative compared to the preceding 12 months. We have classified incidents into *major*, involving serious disturbance including physical and verbal assaults, acts of vandalism and public drug taking, *nuisance* including excessive noise, graffiti and complaints of young people 'hanging about' and *other* which comprises complaints about adults and neighbour disputes.

**Table 3 Complaints about Anti-social Behaviour in Reidvale:  
April 2004 to March 2005**

	2003-2004	2004-2005	Percent
Major Incidents	197	106	-46
Nuisance	196	110	-44
Other	39	38	-3
Total	432	254	-41

Source: Strathclyde Police records of complaints about youth and street disorder in the Reidvale area, 01/04/03 to 29/03/05

The figures reveal that complaints overall fell by 41 percent over the period of the initiative. The particular targeting of police patrol activities towards young people is demonstrated in the fall in complaints of 46 percent and 44 percent relating to major incidents and youth nuisance respectively whilst incidents involving adults and within properties show little change. There were considerable falls for each month during the initiative compared to the previous 12 months with the exception of September 2004 and the cumulative impact of the initiative is demonstrated by the 70 percent fall in complaints in its final 3 months compared to the monthly situation before the initiative began. Further data provided by Strathclyde Police showed that complaint levels were down a third from the situation two years ago. Reidvale Housing Association also recorded a 35 percent fall in the number of recorded vandalism records over the course of the initiative compared to the previous 12 months (150 incidents costing £5631.17 compared to 232 incidents costing £7796.29). By comparing the dates and times of complaints with logs of additional patrol times it is also

possible to show that there were proportionally less calls about youth nuisance and street disorder during the times of police patrols (an average of 0.31) than during equivalent days and times when the patrols were not operating (an average of 0.73); and this finding was consistent for each weekday.

Table 4 shows that the proportion of residents regarding the activities of young people as big problems in their locality halved by the end of the initiative and there were considerable reductions in the proportion of residents who believed anti-social behaviour involving young people was getting worse.

**Table 4 Reidvale Residents' Perceptions of Anti-Social Behaviour Involving Young People**

	2004	2005	% change
<i>Residents reporting 'Fairly Big' or 'Very Big' problem (percent)</i>			
Rowdy or disrespectful young people	79	33	-46
Teenagers hanging around the streets	79	33	-46
Vandalism	78	32	-46
Graffiti	77	27	-50
Drugs and alcohol	67	38	-29
<i>Residents reporting that problem got worse in the last 12 months (percent)</i>			
Rowdy or disrespectful young people	48	6	-42
Teenagers hanging around the street	48	6	-42
Vandalism	43	7	-36
Graffiti	42	7	-35
Drugs and alcohol	40	9	-31
Residents avoiding walking past groups of young people	63	57	-6

Source: Household Surveys April 2004 and April 2005 (N= 181)

However, attributing the fall in anti-social behaviour amongst young people in Reidvale solely to the policing initiative is problematic. According to Strathclyde Police figures, the

fall in Reidvale was proportionally the same as two surrounding neighbourhoods (though considerably higher than the most adjacent neighbourhood) and was the same as the proportional fall across the wider East End of Glasgow. On the other hand, these figures also suggest that concerns about the initiative merely displacing youth disturbance into neighbouring communities may have been unfounded.

### **b) Changing Relations Between the Police and Young People**

Much has been written about the uses and meanings of public space and the way in which it is/should be policed (See Loader, 1996 and Corrigan, 1976). The most striking observation is that three decades later we are still having the same debates. Walsh (2002) has argued that by policing curfews, officers run the risk of alienating themselves from young people, whilst at the same time increasing hostility amongst young people and losing any respect they had with this group.

Unlike the Reidvale initiative, relations between the police and young people were not prioritised either by police officers or NDC practitioners when implementing the dispersal order. During patrols, officers referred to themselves humorously as the 'child catchers'.

Young people reported an increased hostility between themselves and the police and spoke at length of the perceived unfairness of the order and also the inconsistency in the way it was policed.

*They only go for the kids they don't go after the adults. They think we're easier. We're easier to target aren't we? (14-year-old female)*

*Sometimes you might get these nice police officers yeah, who just tell you to move away from the area cos people are asleep, but some knob heads they'll tell you to f\*\* off home just get away from the area and if I see you in this area I'll just lock you up. (16-year-old male)*

The 9pm curfew was an issue that produced a great deal of resentment. The overall consensus was that 9pm was too early to have to return and stay at home. The young people also bemoaned the fact that it was unfair for police officers to have this authority.

*They think they're your mum and dad or summat setting your own curfew up. (14-year-old male)*

This grievance does raise the issue of the extent to which the government should have the right to intervene in family matters such as what time young people return home at night (Walsh, 2002).

Police officers in Loader's (1996) study appreciated how counter productive police practice could be in dealing with young people 'hanging around'. There was an acknowledgement that intervention in some instances merely amplified existing tensions. Young people in Manchester were asked their opinions of the effect of the order on their relationship with the police. The majority stated that they tended to ignore the order i.e. in most cases the curfew. They argued that it had adversely affected their behaviour as it created a greater

antagonism towards the police due to its perceived unfairness.

*It made us worse because the police make you angry for making you go home at that time, so when you see em you just annoy them. (15-year-old male)*

*So if they take you home you just go back out again and then you get caught again and you just get into even more trouble. (14-year-old male)*

Evaluations carried out in the USA have demonstrated that, in general, curfews have little effect on decreasing the levels of youth crime and in some instances serve to increase it. (see Males and Macallair, 1999 and Budd, 1999).

The broader issue of ownership of the 'streets' was referred to by one young person.

*You're not going to leave the area are you if the police tell you to. It's not their area it's ours innit? (16-year-old male)*

Loader (1996:52) describes the importance attached to hanging around the streets in groups as defining a sense of place. This allows young people to develop an informal understanding of what constitutes 'our area'.

Advocates of curfews often cite the safety of young people as a justification for their use (See Jeffs and Smith, 1996). NDC practitioners were of this view, as they perceived both the dispersal and the curfew element of the order as being a valuable safety mechanism for young people as it reduced the number who could be out on the streets late at night.

*As a safety issue it gets young people off the streets at a reasonable time. It came into effect at the end of September when dark nights and safety issues come to the fore. (NDC Community Safety Manager)*

With respect to the dispersal element of the order, neither NDC practitioners nor police officers referred to the fact that young people are far more likely to become victims of crime than older groups and are usually actively encouraged to socialise in groups of more than two. (see Wood, 2004 and Anderson et al, 1994).

The views of young people contradicted those of the police and NDC practitioners as they felt that the dispersal element of the order actually put them at a heightened risk of victimisation.

*One day they tell ya to hang about with more people so you're not getting jumped or ought and then the next day they're saying you can't. It's just like saying you're not allowed to have more than two friends. (14-year-old male)*

*Nah, there's no way that's fair because you see on the news or TV after there's been a rape or murder all you see on the news yeah is if you're going out go with a friend never be on your own, that's one thing I don't understand. The police must want people to be murdered or raped. (16-year-old male)*

A number of young people believed that the order was unnecessary as they did not congregate in residential areas causing distress to local residents. They explained that they would rather 'hang out' in areas such as parks where there was little adult or police presence. They felt particularly aggrieved that one of the main parks fell within the designated dispersal area, thereby limiting their access to this location.

*We go in the parks and then they cordon it all off so then what can we do? (14-year-old male)*

Legitimate facilities for young people in the area were also restricted. For example, youth clubs were asked to close early to ensure that young people were 'off the streets' by 9pm. This seems to be at odds with the Home Office guidance on curfew schemes published after the CDA 1998. 'It is not intended to effect children who are going about their legitimate business such as coming home from a youth club unless there is evidence that they are at risk.' (Home Office, 2001a:4). Practitioners also failed to provide any alternative youth diversionary activities. In a review of curfew initiatives in the USA, Banerjee (1994), found that those regimes which offered youth programmes alongside the stipulations of the curfew were more effective.

It can be concluded that the implementation of the dispersal order served to increase hostilities between young people and the police. From the outset, practitioners missed the opportunity to try and generate more positive encounters between the two. Although NDC practitioners canvassed the opinion of adult residents with respect to implementing the order, nothing similar was carried out with young people in the area. No efforts were made to visit schools and discuss the requirements of the order and seek feedback from young people regarding the types of diversionary activities they would like to see in the area.

In Glasgow, police officers, housing officers and youth workers believed that the initiative had been largely beneficial for relations between the police and young people. The additional time has enabled officers to engage with young people in greater depth and to seek longer term solutions, which crucially also meant challenging adults about their responses to young people, as a community police officer described:

*Guys in patrol cars are under pressure to sort something out and move on to the next call. We have more time to sort it out and look to longer term solutions, we can speak to a group of kids for five to ten minutes, we have time to listen to the kids...*

The increased regular interaction between police officers and young people also widened encounters to include positive situations as another police officer described:

*Officers on the regular shift are responding to complaint calls and are operating in a negative context when there has been a complaint about young people's behaviour. We are able to speak to kids in a positive context which is very important, we can ask them if they are behaving and praise them when they are.*

Police officers believed that these more positive encounters had impacted on general relations between the police and young people in the Reidvale area:

*We've improved relations with young people. I was in [a local youth facility] and kids were shouting my name, kids are starting to like us, kids know who we are and what we are trying to do. There is a perception of fairness. This leads to cooperation, for example kids gave us information about a missing youngster.*

Whilst increased encounters and recognition between the police and young people had improved the effectiveness of enforcement activity, as a police officer described.

*we know who the young people are now, and where they live. There is no point in them running away*

This increased knowledge also enabled the police to engage with parents about their children's behaviour and to negotiate strategies to resolve problematic behaviour before situations escalated, and police officers reported that visiting parents was an increasingly important element of their activities. However a local youth worker pointed out that young people were more likely to be moved on due to the additional police presence, often on multiple occasions in the same evening and that this bred some resentment towards the police, the continuing adult intolerance and the lack of 'legitimate' facilities and activities for young people in the area.

## Conclusions

The relative success of the Glasgow scheme indicates that local initiatives need to be adequately resourced and enforced consistently. Local initiatives also require an enhanced police presence to be used to foster positive interactions between police officers and young people, and for punitive enforcement action to be balanced with simultaneous action to provide 'legitimate' activities for young people. These findings also suggest that local initiatives require a sensitive dialogue and partnership with young people and parents as well as other residents. It is striking that neither initiative impacted significantly on relations between young people and adults or addressed the on-going intolerance of young people's presence in public space, even when they are acting in a law-abiding manner.

Much of the hostility of young people in Manchester towards the police arose from the curfew aspect of the dispersal order which presupposes that young people's presence in specific locations at certain times is problematic or unacceptable.

The dispersal order is an example of an oppressive mechanism of state control over young people which criminalises previously non-criminal behaviour (Walsh, 2002). The governance of young people's behaviour through the imposition of increasingly punitive measures need to be viewed in terms of the messages they send out about young people by increasing fear and intolerance and also the degenerative effect they have on relations between young people and those organisations who seek to control them.

Finally, the focus on neighbourhood-level interventions and the increasing use of mixed economy security patrols by local communities (ODPM, 2005; Crawford et al., 2005) raises wider issues about equality and scales of intervention. Both the Manchester and Glasgow

initiatives were deployed in small defined neighbourhoods. In the Reidvale initiative, an additional police presence was purchased by tenants, through their housing association, to serve a designated area. It may be argued that tenants in social housing should not be paying twice for adequate policing services. However, the fact that Reidvale residents received an enhanced service not available to other residents in surrounding communities symbolises the concerns about a two tier provision of public safety mechanisms and the emergence of levels of community safety becoming increasingly linked to the financial and organisational resources that particular communities are able to access to secure additional public and private policing presences (Loader, 2000; Hope, 2000; Boudreau and Kiel, 2001). Addressing anti-social behaviour amongst young people not only requires a balance between prevention and enforcement and a recognition of the rights as well as responsibilities of young people but also to be grounded in a more equitable public policing approach that reduces, rather than exacerbates, security differentials between neighbourhoods.

## Note

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