

Not preventing antisocial behaviour costs more in the longer term because it can lead to homelessness, ill-health, social exclusion, educational underachievement and unemployment. It has been estimated, for example, that the costs to a landlord to evict a tenant for antisocial behaviour are between £6,500 and £9,500.³ And recent research into the Supporting People programme⁴ calculated that it delivered tangible benefits with a total estimated value of £81.56 million from the Supporting People expenditure on homeless families of £52 million per annum.

Preventing homelessness and encouraging children to attend school brings wider benefits to society, especially in terms of employment and earning potential. A 2002 study by Scott et al⁵ showed that the costs to society, in particular to the penal and benefits systems, for children who exhibited a persistent and pervasive pattern of antisocial behaviour in childhood or adolescence, were nearly 10 times higher than for children who exhibited no problems.

Tackling antisocial behaviour also has a positive effect on deprived communities. If people who would otherwise be evicted for unacceptable behaviour are allowed to remain in their homes, there is a reduction in the 'social churning' caused by rapid turnover of tenancies.

These considerations suggest that the average Shelter Inclusion Project cost of £9,000 per household is good value for money for the Exchequer and for society.

Conclusion

Shelter Inclusion Project represents a unique and successful model for tackling antisocial behaviour.

The evaluation showed that several key aspects of the project's design contributed to its positive outcomes:

- voluntary sector management and the independence of the project
- a voluntary approach to participation
- floating support
- a focus on antisocial behaviour and support to tackle it
- the capacity to work across many types of household and with all household members
- a flexible approach
- inter-agency partnerships.

Shelter Inclusion Project has been awarded ongoing Supporting People funding to cover two-thirds of its costs. Grants from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the Children's Fund are secure until 2008, and the project is seeking mainstream funding.

Future plans include developing the service for children, working in partnership with black and minority ethnic housing associations, and developing a volunteer scheme to extend capacity. Shelter Inclusion Project also intends to expand the range of its referral agencies in order to attract a more diverse range of service users.

3. Pawson, H et al, *The Use of Possession Actions and Evictions by Social Landlords*, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, (ODPM), London, 2005
4. Matrix Research and Consultancy, *Supporting People: Benefits Realisation of the Supporting People Programme*, ODPM, London, 2004
5. Scott, S et al, *Financial Cost of Social Exclusion: follow-up study of anti-social behaviour children into adulthood*, British Medical Journal, Volume 323, pages 191-194, 2002

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Addressing antisocial behaviour

An independent evaluation of Shelter Inclusion Project

Shelter Inclusion Project has been developed in partnership with Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council to pilot a new approach to tackling antisocial behaviour. Launched in 2002, the project works with households to identify and deal with the causes of antisocial behaviour, and to build the skills people need to enable them to resolve their situation.

The project was piloted for three years and evaluated independently by the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York, with the support of the Housing Corporation. The evaluation found that the project succeeded in ending antisocial behaviour and promoting tenancy sustainment among the majority of households that had completed their time with the project.

Shelter Inclusion Project demonstrates how meeting the support needs of households can reduce the levels of antisocial behaviour, and the risk of homelessness and social exclusion.

Key findings

- Of the 45 households that completed their time with the project, 60 per cent no longer exhibited any antisocial behaviour.
- A further 11 per cent of these 'closed cases' were reported as showing improvements in their behaviour.
- 84 per cent of closed cases were assessed as no longer being at risk of homelessness following contact with Shelter Inclusion Project.
- Almost 50 per cent of closed-case households were reported as making progress with money management and a small number of adults experienced an improvement in their economic status during their time with the project.
- Shelter Inclusion Project helped to re-engage marginalised children. Of the 34 children and young people who received direct support with education, 91 per cent showed improvements in school attendance.
- Service users reported that the project had made a significant difference to their lives. Many said it had raised their self-esteem and prevented them from being evicted. Most service users felt more in control of their lives, and were managing to address their antisocial behaviour.

This summary document has been produced by Shelter and is based on the full-length final evaluation report. This is available from Shelter's online bookshop at www.shelter.org.uk/bookshop or by calling 020 7505 2036. Shelter's bookshop offers a wide range of other materials, both free and for purchase.

Tackling antisocial behaviour

Policy context

Antisocial behaviour is at the top of the Government's policy agenda. Numerous initiatives have focused on enforcement mechanisms such as Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), but newer policy approaches, such as the Government's Respect Action Plan, include an emphasis on family support and rehabilitation.

Following the success of NCH's Families Project in Dundee, which works with families in a residential setting, a small number of projects have been set up to work intensively with households to tackle their antisocial behaviour. These projects are all based in the north west of England, and work with families with children.

Shelter Inclusion Project – a unique model

Shelter Inclusion Project was developed following evidence from Shelter's housing services that antisocial behaviour is often caused by unmet support needs. Instead of focusing on enforcement, it identifies the cause of the unacceptable behaviour and supports people who are vulnerable to eviction and social exclusion as a result of it. Shelter Inclusion Project is also the only known intervention scheme working with single people and couples as well as households with children.

Causes of antisocial behaviour

People who carry out antisocial acts are often vulnerable, usually poor and often have mental health problems and community care needs.¹ They may themselves be victims of antisocial behaviour. Antisocial behaviour is not tenure specific, but it tends to be associated with wider social exclusion and problems such as poverty, family stress, community disorganisation, drug dependency, and truancy and school exclusion.

About Shelter Inclusion Project

The aims of the project are:

- to reduce antisocial behaviour
- to promote social inclusion and community stability
- to prevent eviction and provide a route back into settled housing.

Shelter Inclusion Project offers a wide-ranging package of support to households who have difficulty in complying with the terms of their tenancy agreements. The project helps highly

marginalised, vulnerable households, many of whom have fallen out with their neighbours and feel their own behaviour is out of control. The majority of households in contact with the project are also at risk of homelessness.

The support provided by the project is focused on preventing antisocial behaviour, both by addressing specific aspects of individuals' behaviour and by addressing wider needs – indebtedness that might cause stress and result in antisocial behaviour, for example.

Shelter Inclusion Project works with up to 33 households at a time for an average of 12 months. The staff-to-user ratio is approximately 1:10–11. The project employs 10 staff including a project manager, four support staff (two full-time and two half-time), a children and youth worker team leader, two children and young person's workers (job-share), an administrator (part-time) and an office assistant.

Most households are allocated a support worker and a children's worker where appropriate. The project is based in a central location in Rochdale but works mainly with people in their own homes. Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council's housing department refers the majority of households, although referrals also come from housing associations and other agencies.

The main referral criteria are that households:

- are homeless or facing imminent homelessness
- have a history of antisocial behaviour
- are willing to engage with the service.

Following referral, staff assess the household's needs and draw up a multi-agency support plan. As well as providing support, staff liaise with other agencies that offer specialised help such as advice on mental health problems or drug dependency.

The main types of support offered include:

- help managing bills, money and debts
- support to address specific acts of antisocial behaviour
- help claiming benefits
- liaising with schools about attendance problems
- developing parenting skills
- providing vouchers, tools or help with decorating or gardening.

1. See Brown et al, 2003, Dillane et al, 2001, Nixon et al, 2000, Social Exclusion Unit, 2000

Profile of service users

- During the three-year pilot, the project supported 74 households containing 230 people – 98 adults and 132 children or dependent teenagers.
- Between them, the households had been subject to 149 actions for antisocial behaviour, including written and verbal warnings, eviction, injunctions and ASBOs.
- The most common forms of antisocial behaviour were noise (38 per cent of adults) and youth nuisance (25 per cent of children). Twenty-six per cent of adults were involved in neighbour disputes, while 14 per cent of households were unable to keep visitors under control.
- The majority of households were facing homelessness when referred to Shelter Inclusion Project – 89 per cent were at risk of losing their home, and 38 per cent had been homeless at least once before.
- Service users were experiencing social exclusion and had high support needs. More than half the households contained an adult with depression or other mental health problem. Drug and alcohol dependency among adults was a problem in 23 per cent of households and there was an adult with a limiting illness or disability in 28 per cent of households.
- The households were almost all economically inactive at the point of referral; 25 per cent had one debt and 38 per cent had two or more debts.
- Most of the households, 67 per cent, contained children. Lone parents formed the most common type of household at 43 per cent, lone adults made up 28 per cent of households and 24 per cent contained a couple with children or an extended family. The remaining five per cent of households contained adults sharing.
- Children were often experiencing disruption to their education, including truanting and exclusion. Of the 96 children of school age, 24 per cent were either temporarily or permanently excluded or missing significant amounts of school. There were child protection concerns for 15 of the households and in six cases children were put on the child protection register following the project's intervention.

Outcomes

Of the 45 households that completed their time with the project, 60 per cent no longer exhibited any antisocial behaviour and a further 11 per cent showed improvements in their behaviour. Additionally, 84 per cent of closed cases were assessed as no longer being at risk of homelessness. Dealing with antisocial behaviour was usually a long process that involved service users learning how to communicate more effectively with other people in their life and in the wider community.

A number of service users described how the process of being supported and trusted had, over time, given them resources on which they could draw to manage their lives better. Almost 50 per cent of closed-case households were reported as making progress with money management and a small number of adults experienced an improvement in their economic status while involved with the project.

Not all service users had succeeded in transforming their lives and some continued to experience problems. Nevertheless, many believed that things had improved for them and that they would have been evicted had they not had Shelter's support.

Agency representatives also felt the project had been successful in achieving its aims and that it had had a positive impact on individual households and their immediate neighbours.

Costs and cost consequences

In assessing the effectiveness of the project, the costs associated with each household need to be considered against the potential costs that might have been incurred by the Exchequer had the household not been associated with the project.

Antisocial behaviour is estimated to cost £3.4bn a year in England and Wales.²

Shelter Inclusion Project's total income and expenditure each year was approximately £300,000. The main income sources were Supporting People and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The project's average cost for each household whose case had been closed was around £9,000. Costs ranged from approximately £2,700 to £3,400 for each household member.

2. *Together: tackling anti-social behaviour* – the one day count of anti-social behaviour, London: Home Office, 2003