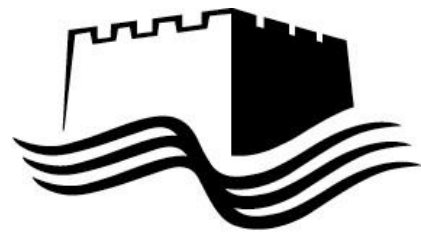


## **APPENDIX ONE**

**How the Council, Police and Social Landlords promote the reporting of incidents of drug dealing, drug taking and related ASB in communal spaces and communicate the outcome of this reporting**

**Scrutiny Report**



**TOWER HAMLETS**

**London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
April 2015**

## Chair's Foreword

---

Month after month, Tower Hamlets appears second in the list of London boroughs with the highest rate of reported anti-social behaviour (ASB). The casework belonging to councillors often reflects this.

The police along with the council and social landlords have a duty to work in partnership to resolve this persistent problem. Feedback from the various agencies involved suggests that the local partnership model is working. However, residents and councillors often report that this multi-agency approach can sometimes lead to confusion. For example, some residents' notice boards in the borough can have three different posters explaining the routes available to report anti-social behaviour.

The reporting of ASB becomes more confusing when this behaviour is caused by drug abuse because of the crossover into criminal activity. Residents are also often unsure which agency is the first port of call.

Even though the scope of this work was to look into the reporting of drug related ASB, the review focused on how ASB overall is reported, including how the outcome of this reporting is then communicated to residents. Since many cite that they have not been updated on the actions taken by agencies, nor have any knowledge of how problems have been resolved.

The review makes six recommendations to improve partnership working in Tower Hamlets with the aim to reduce this confusion.

I would like to thank representatives from the Metropolitan Police Service, council officers, Tower Hamlets Homes, One Housing Group, Poplar HARCA and the residents who participated in the workshop session.

Cllr John Pierce

## **Summary of Recommendations**

---

### **Recommendation 1**

The council, through the relevant Community Safety Partnership (CSP) sub-group - the ASB Strategy Group, brings together the police, Social Landlords (SLs) and other partners to:

- A) Develop a clear shared statement as to what qualifies as ASB, and how a resident should report ASB which is consistent across the borough and SL areas
- B) Agree a minimum standard in terms of how partnership organisations will report back on the outcomes of ASB reporting (individual incidents, at an area / estate level and borough wide)
- C) Reiterate the commitment that all SLs should encourage residents to report ASB through the 101 line so that there is a more comprehensive borough-wide understanding of ASB reporting across partners.

### **Recommendation 2**

The council, through the CSP ASB Strategy Group, oversees a renewed partnership promotional campaign to encourage ASB reporting. The campaign should:

- A) Include strong police and social landlord involvement
- B) Be informed by the experience of the 101 reporting campaign undertaken in 2013
- C) Include a focus on the reporting of drug-related ASB
- D) Reiterate a clear message on how residents report ASB which is consistent across the borough and SLs.

### **Recommendation 3**

The council, through the relevant CSP sub-group – the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) ASB Forum – brings together housing providers to explore implementation of a consistent approach to ASB surveying which supports robust benchmarking across SLs, including the identification of good practice and areas / SLs requiring improvement.

### **Recommendation 4**

The council, through the RSL ASB forum, investigate a pilot approach to 'Participatory Appraisal Training', in order to support residents to challenge local agencies and shape the approach to tackling anti-social behaviour.

### **Recommendation 5**

The allocation of any youth service grants which primarily aim to reduce ASB activity, should be informed by 101 data on the reporting of ASB incidents.

### **Recommendation 6**

The council, through the CSP ASB Strategy Group, brings together the police and housing partners to consider how best the partnership can provide a good service in the context of reducing resources, including exploring social media and new technology to both promote ASB reporting to 101 and feeding back on ASB reports.

# 1 Introduction

---

- 1.1 Anti-social behaviour is a key issue of public concern. In 2010/11, over three million incidents of anti-social behaviour were reported to the police in England and Wales. Many more were reported to other local agencies such as local councils, and housing associations, or not reported at all.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 During the period 2013 to 2015, the Metropolitan Police Service recorded 38,030 calls in Tower Hamlets reporting anti-social behaviour.<sup>2</sup> Results from the council's Annual Residents Survey (ARS) in 2014 show that the level of concern over people using or dealing drugs is considered a *very or fairly big problem* by 59 per cent of residents – up 4 points on the previous year.
- 1.3 Resident perceptions regarding how successfully the police and other local public services deal with ASB issues in their local area is relatively positive overall. 51 per cent of the residents surveyed in the ARS in 2014 agreed that the police and local agencies were successful in resolving this issue; 21 per cent disagreed and 28 per cent neither agreed nor disagreed, or did not know. This is a similar picture to previous years.
- 1.4 Tackling ASB, and perceptions of ASB, is a council priority. Activity in this area has been stepped up through additional enforcement services, and targeted work carried out by the council's Youth Service which works with over half of the young population to engage them in positive activities. Tower Hamlets has also increased funding in its CCTV control room to support better handling of ASB reports.
- 1.5 However, selling of drugs, drug misuse and related ASB in communal spaces remains a recurring issue raised by residents at Members' surgeries and in their casework. Some Members have expressed concern that advice and promotional information from the various agencies on reporting these issues can be confusing. Furthermore, residents who do report incidents are often unaware of the outcome of their reporting. This lack of communication on outcomes may also be a contributory factor of underreporting of ASB in the borough. It is not always clear to residents what the role of social landlords is in dealing with incidents of drugs related ASB in neighbourhoods.
- 1.6 The scrutiny review focused on considering how the council, the police and SLs promote the reporting of drugs incidents and related ASB in communal spaces, and how they communicate the outcome of this reporting. For the purpose of this review, Social Landlords were invited to participate, including Tower Hamlets Homes (an arm's length organisation which manages the council's housing stock), Poplar HARCA and One Housing.
- 1.7 The aim of the review was to assess existing arrangements and explore ways to improve communications and engagement activity.
- 1.8 The review was underpinned by three core questions:

---

<sup>1</sup> Home Office (2012). *Focus on the victim: Summary report on the ASB call handling trials.*

<sup>2</sup> Disaggregated data on drugs related ASB reported is not available.

- a) What are the current arrangements for residents to report drug dealing, drug taking and related ASB taking place in communal spaces?
- b) How do the various agencies communicate the outcome of reporting drugs incidents and related ASB?
- c) How can we improve residents' confidence in the reporting of drug dealing, drug taking and related ASB?

1.9 The review was chaired by Cllr John Pierce, over the course of two sessions in March and April 2015. A resident workshop<sup>3</sup> was held at the Whitechapel Idea Store and a professionals and stakeholders session at Mulberry Place.

1.10 Other members of the Review Group included Nozrul Mustafa, a Parent/Governor Co-opted Member of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

1.11 The review was supported by Shamima Khatun, Strategy, Policy and Performance Officer; LBTH.

1.12 The Review Group received evidence from a range of members, officers and experts including;

<b>Cllr Ohid Ahmed</b>	Cabinet Member for Community Safety
<b>Andy Bamber</b>	Service Head, Community Service LBTH
<b>Emily Fieran-Reed</b>	Head of Community Safety Partnership, Domestic Violence & Hate Crime LBTH
<b>Kevin Jones</b>	Interim Director of Neighbourhoods at Tower Hamlets Homes and Chair of the RSL Anti-Social Behaviour Forum
<b>Jamie Lock</b>	Assistant Director of ASB, Poplar HARCA
<b>Kiera Curran</b>	Anti-Social Behaviour Manager, One Housing Group
<b>Mark Long</b>	Chief Inspector and Co-Chair of ASB Operations Group, Metropolitan Police
<b>Paul Dunn</b>	Chair of London ASB Managers Group
<b>Yvette Holmes</b>	ASB Manager, Tower Hamlets Homes
<b>Fokrul Hoque</b>	Chair of the Safer Neighbourhood Board

1.13 The agenda for the professionals and stakeholders session included an introduction to the key issues under review by Cllr John Pierce followed by presentations and discussion on a range of concerns.

<sup>3</sup> Please note that this list of review participants is not exhaustive and does not include residents who did not wish to give their details.

## 2 Background

---

### *National profile of ASB reporting model(s)*

- 2.1 Across England, '101' – the police non-emergency number - is promoted as the main route to report instances of anti-social behaviour experienced to local police. It is also possible to contact the police in person, by attending the front office of a local police station, or by attending local neighbourhood tasking meetings, which enable members of the community to meet with local officers to discuss issues of concern and influence local policing priorities.

### *Inner London profile of ASB reporting*

- 2.2 Local authorities in inner London have promoted the following reporting routes:
- Police switchboard 101 the non-emergency number which is available 24 hours a day
  - Via local wards policing officer(s) / Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs)
  - Police online reporting system (captured on 101)
  - Through partner agencies, including Social Landlords
  - Directly to local authorities

### *Good Practice on ASB call handling*

- 2.3 The term 'anti-social behaviour' was defined in law in the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act, to describe the everyday nuisance, disorder and crime that mattered to local people but which many police forces and partner agencies were not prioritising. The definition was accompanied by civil powers such as the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), which were intended to provide an alternative to criminal prosecution in cases where it was difficult to prove that a crime had been committed, or where victims were afraid to give evidence against their neighbours.
- 2.4 In September 2010, Sir Denis O'Connor, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC), published 'Stop the Rot'; his review of the way the 43 police forces in England and Wales respond to anti-social behaviour. He reported that there had been significant improvements, that all forces list anti-social behaviour as a strategic priority, and that neighbourhood policing in particular can make a big difference when done properly. However, anti-social behaviour is still the crime and policing issue that matters most at a local level and remains one of the most common incident types.
- 2.5 The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) published a report in 2012 titled 'Focus on the Victim: Summary Report on the ASB Call Handling Trials' after extensive trials conducted by eight volunteer forces which included the Metropolitan Police Service. This work represented a 'bottom-up' effort to shift practitioners' focus from logging types of anti-social behaviour, to protecting victims and communities from harm.

- 2.6 The work carried out by the eight forces identified five core principles at the heart of a more effective approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour, focused on harm to the victim or community, rather than categorising the behaviour itself. Four of these principles pertain to how practitioners with responsibility for addressing the problem need to have a clear knowledge and understanding of the importance of effective intelligence gathering and analysis of ASB data. They are:
- An effective call handling system for anti-social behaviour incidents, logging information from the first point of contact so that repeat callers and high-risk cases are flagged up;
  - Using simple, 'off-the-shelf' IT to share information between local agencies and enable a more joined-up approach to protecting victims at risk;
  - All agencies dealing with anti-social behaviour in an area having a shared set of case management principles; and
  - A robust community engagement process to identify issues which are causing the most harm to individuals and neighbourhoods, and how the police, other local agencies and the public can work together to address them.
- 2.7 The significance of recording and categorising ASB was expounded upon in 2010, when Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) undertook a review to determine how well police forces understood and responded to their local ASB problems and published its findings in the report: 'A Step in the Right Direction: The policing of anti-social behaviour'. More than 5,500 members of the public who had recently reported ASB to the police were surveyed (taking a sample from each force area), to find out about their experiences. The report highlighted the importance of increasing effective intelligence gathering and analysis of ASB data as key to the Police Service getting as true a picture as possible of the extent and nature of the problem in localities.

#### *Local partnership working*

- 2.8 The Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a multi-agency strategic group set up following the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The partnership approach is built on the premise that no single agency can deal with, or be responsible for dealing with, complex community safety issues and that these issues can be addressed more effectively and efficiently through working in partnership.
- 2.9 The Community Safety Partnership is one of 4 Community Plan Delivery Groups which are held responsible by the Partnership Executive<sup>4</sup> for delivering the priorities contained within the Community Plan. The CSP is made up of both statutory agencies and co-operating bodies within the borough. The statutory agencies are:
- Tower Hamlets Police
  - London Borough of Tower Hamlets

---

<sup>4</sup> The Tower Hamlets Partnership includes the council, the police, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Barts Health, Job Centre Plus, as well as other public sector organisations, and representatives of the voluntary and community sector and businesses.

- National Probation Service
- Hackney, City of London and Tower Hamlets Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
- London Fire Brigade
- NHS Tower Hamlets Clinical Commissioning Group

2.10 The above are supported by other local agencies from both the Public and Voluntary Sectors. Social Landlords have a key role to play in addressing crime and disorder in their housing estates and these are represented by the Chair of the RSL ASB Forum, a sub-group of the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum. Victims and witnesses of crime and disorder are represented on the CSP by Victim Support. The extensive network of voluntary organisations within the borough, are represented by the Chief Executive of Tower Hamlets Council for Voluntary Services. The council's third sector team are also invited.

*ASB reporting arrangements in Tower Hamlets*

2.11 A key step in the Home Office and national partners' commitment to cut crime and empower citizens to keep their neighbourhoods safe, is to make it easier to contact the police and report crime and disorder. In January 2012, the national roll-out of the '101' non-emergency number was completed, marking a significant step forward in the Government's ambition to reconnect the police and public. The introduction of the '101' number gives the public across England and Wales one easy and memorable number to contact their local police force for crimes and concerns that do not require an emergency response.

Following the national guidance highlighted above, the council made a decision that the responsibility to tackle ASB in the borough would be primarily through a single reporting channel – the police non-emergency 101 reporting line - and discontinued the promotion of other reporting routes previously in operation. This approach involved a shift from multiple reporting routes that covered a range of ASB areas and services including noise nuisance, hate crime, graffiti removal and numerous SL/SNT contact numbers – not all of which were formally recorded - to a central reporting line. To this end, the council launched a promotional campaign in 2013 advocating this service through a number of communication channels which included issuing '101' calling cards, '101' success case study leaflets and publicising in the borough's community newspaper 'East End Life' and through advertisements in BME press.

2.12 While most ASB calls are dealt with by police officers responding to reports logged by the '101' service, there remain alternative methods through which residents may in fact report ASB, including through the relevant SL. These reports will not necessarily be recorded on the 101 database. For this reason, the RSL ASB Forum agreed that SLs would ask residents to also report ASB, highlighted to them, through the 101 service. In addition to this, responsibility for dealing with complaints of ASB crosses local organisations including the police, council and SLs.

2.13 Social landlords play a critical role in tackling anti-social behaviour and addressing its underlying causes in the areas where they own and manage



homes. They also have a range of tools and powers available for them to deploy in resolving complaints of ASB. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 replaced Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions with new tools to support 'putting victims first' and to give flexibility to deal with situations where any of the broad range of behaviours described as anti-social behaviour are present.

2.14 Social landlords and private registered providers have a role to play under the 2014 Act through joint working with other agencies and sharing information to ensure the best results for victims. Social landlords can now employ some of the new powers provided by the 2014 Act to enable more choice in the way that reports of ASB are responded to; the focus now squarely on the impact on the victim(s) instead of the behaviour itself. Studies show that early informal intervention is an effective method of resolving ASB.<sup>5</sup> These may range from verbal or written warnings, community resolution, mediation, acceptable behaviour contracts, parenting contracts to support and counselling.

2.15 The following are relevant to social landlords:

*Civil Injunctions*

SLs may apply for non-housing related or housing related injunctions. Housing related injunctions are not limited to perpetrators who are their own tenants.

*Community Protection Notices (CPN)*

SLs designated by the council may issue a CPN in relation to behaviour that has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality where it is persistent or continuing and unreasonable. SLs may issue a fixed penalty notice of up to £100 if appropriate for a breach of the CPN.

*Possession Proceedings*

SLs have power to seek to possess the home of its tenant who has been found guilty of anti-social behaviour or criminality. A new ground for possession provides a shorter route to possession by taking away the courts discretion and making a possession order a mandatory requirement if the relevant grounds are proved.

2.16 Social landlords in Tower Hamlets offer and promote a range of methods to report ASB. This includes sign-posting residents to '101', as well as by contacting the SL directly, including by telephone, email, online, Twitter, Facebook, in person and, in some cases, to a dedicated SL ASB team. The methods and channels offered are not necessarily consistent across all SLs, reflecting a diversity of local approaches.

2.17 Measures by the council to address incidents of ASB by non-SL tenants lie with the council's ASB Operations Team such as case investigators, who liaise with the police and enforcement team to find solutions to the problem, take action, and when appropriate, use the powers set out by the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act of 2014. ASB logged by the council is also passed onto the relevant neighbourhood policing team and recorded on FLARE, the council's database for recording ASB case management. On

---

<sup>5</sup> 2013 HouseMark survey shows that 80% of anti-social behaviour cases dealt with by social landlords were successfully resolved by early intervention.

the council website, residents are encouraged to contact the police or housing provider in the first instance to resolve the ASB issue.

- 2.18 Reporting can also take place at 'Action Day' events, which bring together ward councillors, police officers and professionals to explore local crime and ASB issues and how best to address them. In addition, since October 2012, the Lead Member for Community Safety, the Community Safety Partnership and Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT) have implemented two rounds of community safety ward walkabouts (October 2012 to May 2013 and October 2013 to April 2014) across all wards in the borough. The ward walkabouts are an 'on the ground' ASB focused project to deal with local issues based on '101' reports. Community safety partners are able to visit each individual ward together and experience first-hand the issues affecting residents and gather valuable community intelligence at the scene. Actions for relevant partners are agreed at each walkabout and partners are asked to respond swiftly to ensure the crime and ASB concerns of residents are dealt with quickly. The police promotes the '101' contact service in all its mainstream communications. SNTs also deploy their Twitter accounts.

*Informing communities about action and outcomes from complaints*

- 2.19 All agencies involved in tackling ASB indicated that they aimed to report back to residents who have reported ASB directly to them. The police acknowledged that there was limited resources for them to lead broader communications work, such as at an estate or borough-wide level.
- 2.20 The council explained some of its broader communications work, including signage, public notices and posters that are promoted in communal areas which detail the consequences of individual cases where offenders have been successfully convicted for committing violations. 'Action Taken' leaflets are produced by the council after each community safety surgery and ward walkabout which are fortnightly events, and information uploaded on the internet.
- 2.21 In addition, successes around drugs-related ASB – both the work of the council and partners, including the Metropolitan Police - are promoted by the council's communications team in press releases in East End Life, circulated to a wide range of local, regional and BME media and the council's website and social media. The council has recently observed a growth in public interaction using the latter option. The council's communications lead also meets fortnightly with the Metropolitan Police and encourages them to inform the council of any ASB and crime successes so, even without specific council involvement, these can be publicised. Reference to the '101' service is included in all community safety press releases and promotional materials.
- 2.22 The council also notifies outcomes of reporting to elected Members, local groups, including residents associations, Neighbourhood Watch and Ward Panels, and Partnership Operations. Residents and elected Members can request a Community Trigger if they feel that action has not been taken in relation to ASB. The council and police additionally jointly undertake targeted work with the youth population and families in Tower Hamlets through a series of ongoing events programmes such as Summer Light

Night events, to build a sense of community and increase citizens' confidence to work with partners to address ASB concerns.

- 2.23 In addition to the work highlighted above, SLs use a range of methods to report back at an estate or area level. This includes through neighbourhood planning and Tenants and Residents Association meetings, newsletters and social media. As with ASB reporting the methods and channels used by SLs are not necessarily consistent across all providers, reflecting a diversity of local approaches.

### 3 Key Findings and Recommendations

---

#### Confusion over the term ASB

- 3.1 Public understanding of what constitutes anti-social behaviour is determined by a series of factors including context, location, community tolerance and quality of life expectations.<sup>6</sup> As a result, what may be considered anti-social behaviour to one person can be seen as acceptable behaviour to another. The subjective nature of the concept makes it difficult to identify a single definition. Confusion also exists within the ASB definition contained in the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) which has crime categories in it, specifically drug dealing and possession. There was a general consensus amongst residents and stakeholders who participated in the review that a clear definition of ASB which reflects national guidance would be helpful.

#### Developing a clear reporting and response approach

- 3.2 In acknowledgement of the Metropolitan Police's role as the principal lead for tackling ASB in the borough, agreement exists within the CSP that the '101' number should operate as the primary reporting line for residents to report drug related ASB. Immediately following the council's adoption of 101 as the primary reporting route for ASB, the borough recorded the highest level of ASB reported in London. However, by reviewing the number of calls to the police (101 or 999) for ASB over three control periods i.e. October 2011 to September 2012 (17784 calls recorded), October 2012 to September 2013 (17452 calls recorded) and October 2013 to September 2014 (16052 calls recorded), we can see a decrease of 10 per cent overall. It is clear that whilst there is variation from month to month, the overall trend is downward. The use of a primary reporting route, and cross-Partnership tasking system, makes it easier for the police and CSP to effectively support the mapping of anti-social behaviour hotspots and the analysis of trends to help target the allocation of resources.
- 3.3 Despite this reduction, numbers of reports of ASB to police are still high when compared to other boroughs in London. This may be partly attributed to the CSP's significant promotion of the '101' system for the reporting of ASB, instead of dispersing ASB reporting across agencies which is a common practice in other London boroughs.
- 3.4 In 2013, Tower Hamlets had the highest level of ASB reported to the police in London; it is now second highest after Westminster following a plateau in calls and is now experiencing a downward trend. The CSP predicts that this trend will continue to show a decrease but the level of calls received for ASB is difficult to forecast, and can be influenced significantly by partnership activity, including the encouragement of reporting.
- 3.5 The Interim Director of Neighbourhoods at Tower Hamlets Homes and Chair of the RSL Anti-Social Behaviour Forum reiterated that using '101' has given

---

<sup>6</sup> Nixon, J., Blandy, S., Hunter, C., Jones, A. and Reeve, K. (2003). *Developing Good Practice in Tackling Anti-Social behaviour in Mixed Tenure Areas*. Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University.

the CSP clear insight into ASB in the borough through the production of consistent datasets.

- 3.6 The Review Group noted that despite the promotion of the '101' number as the primary ASB reporting route, there are a multitude of other methods that can be used to report ASB including SLs' own channels. For example, the Chair of the London ASB Managers Group and a representative of Poplar HARCA impressed on the Review Group the merit in encouraging residents to report ASB incidents firstly to '101' and then to the relevant social landlord that manages the estate, because housing providers are able to offer medium to long term solutions whilst the police provide a rapid response. Whilst the Group did not feel these alternatives, and in some cases additional, reporting routes should necessarily be withdrawn or closed-down, Members felt that a shared statement should be developed which sets out how a resident should report ASB which is consistent across the borough and SL areas.
- 3.7 During the resident workshop it was clear to the Review Group that uncertainty appeared to exist amongst local people on which agency to report incidents of ASB to, and the role and responsibilities of various bodies including the council and social landlords.
- 3.8 The Review Group also considered the variety of methods used by local partners to report back on the outcomes of ASB reporting. Whilst the police, council and SLs set out their commitment to respond directly to those reporting an ASB incident, the communications approach was not necessarily consistent at an estate or area level. The Panel heard from residents about the importance of strong communications back to all residents in order to encourage reporting. With this in mind, the Review Group felt that the council should bring together the police and SLs to develop an agreed minimum standard in terms of how partnership organisations will report back on the outcomes of ASB reporting covering individual incidents, at an area / estate level and borough wide.
- 3.9 The Review Group noted the progress in developing a cross-Partnership data set of ASB incidents, which has been supported by the focus on the 101 line and the council and Social Landlords referring incidents to this central line for recording. Nevertheless, it was noted that this 101 data set is not completely comprehensive. The Group felt that all SLs should reiterate the commitment that residents should be encouraged to report ASB through the 101 line so that there is a more comprehensive borough-wide understanding of ASB reporting across partners.

**Recommendation 1**

**The council, through the relevant Community Safety Partnership (CSP) sub-group - the ASB Strategy Group, brings together the police, Social Landlords (SLs) and other partners to:**

- A) Develop a clear shared statement as to what qualifies as ASB, and how a resident should report ASB which is consistent across the borough and SL areas**
- B) Agree a minimum standard in terms of how partnership organisations will report back on the outcomes of ASB reporting (individual incidents, at an area / estate level and borough wide)**
- C) Reiterate the commitment that all SLs should encourage residents to report ASB through the 101 line so that there is a more comprehensive borough-wide understanding of ASB reporting across partners.**

## Promoting ASB reporting

- 3.10 Encouraging ASB reporting is essential to both thoroughly understanding and tackling the problem. Local practitioners need clear, collective protocols for communicating ASB messages to the public, to make clear to residents the ways to report ASB, and to reassure them of the benefits of doing so, through promoting action taken in response to ASB complaints.
- 3.11 The Chair of the London ASB Managers Group confirmed that across London, communications is often suffering due to cutbacks in organisational capacity. This gap in communications is further impacted upon by legal issues which can restrict what information can be feedback to ASB cases. The Chair of the Safer Neighbourhood Board urged partners to concentrate on communicating action taken following residents reporting ASB even if outcomes have not been successful, in order to ensure that a two-way dialogue is maintained. The Review Group acknowledged the importance of making information available to the public which allows them to form their own opinion and keep them informed on 'what' services are doing and not just 'how well'. The need for clarity on who ASB leads are within agencies was also discussed including contact details to make the process of following up reports easier for residents, with the proviso that these leads should encourage reporting through the 101 service, in addition to taking action.
- 3.12 Workshop participants felt that awareness on reporting ASB amongst residents needs to be strengthened especially in neighbourhoods which have a high population turnover. The Group felt that this was particularly important given the existence of multiple reporting channels and the primacy of the 101 service. While anti-social behaviour can occur in any neighbourhood, it is frequently experienced in high density, low income areas where multiple forms of deprivation are prevalent. A British Crime Survey indicated that social housing tenants are almost twice as likely as those in owner occupied or private rented property to perceive anti-social behaviour as a problem in their area. The Review Group felt that a renewed campaign to inform and remind residents on how to report ASB should be undertaken which should be cross-Partnership and informed by the experience of the 101 communications campaign undertaken in 2013.

### **Recommendation 2**

**The council, through the CSP ASB Strategy Group, oversees a renewed partnership promotional campaign to encourage ASB reporting. The campaign should:**

- A) Include strong police and social landlord involvement**
- B) Be informed by the experience of the 101 reporting campaign undertaken in 2013**
- C) Include a focus on the reporting of drug-related ASB**
- D) Reiterate a clear message on how residents report ASB which is consistent across the borough and SLs.**

- 3.13 The Review Group was advised of surveys undertaken by housing providers which seek residents' views in relation to how ASB reporting is handled, e.g. satisfaction with the outcome of an ASB complaint. The Group felt that these surveys would be more valuable if they are comparable across housing providers i.e. using the same methodology and questions. Such an

approach would allow providers – and potentially others – to compare performance in a clear and consistent way, and would support the identification of good practice and areas / SLs requiring improvement.

**Recommendation 3**

**The council, through the relevant CSP sub-group – the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) ASB Forum – brings together housing providers to explore implementation of a consistent approach to ASB surveying which supports robust benchmarking across SLs, including the identification of good practice and areas / SLs requiring improvement.**

**Ways to improve resident engagement in tackling ASB**

- 3.14 In discussing how to boost residents' confidence in reporting ASB, SLs participating in the review agreed that the onus of encouraging reporting lies with the agencies involved in combatting it instead of residents. Hence, One Housing prioritises outreach work as opposed to expecting residents to initiate contact. Poplar HARCA also echoed this by involving residents from estates in arranging and participating in 'Days of Action'. Nevertheless, the Chair of the London ASB Managers Group emphasised the importance of active community involvement as an essential tool to tackle ASB through empowering residents to be actively involved, and getting them to understand the resources available to tackle it. Similarly, the Assistant Director of ASB at Poplar HARCA highlighted the benefit of training the community to get information from residents and feed back to local people, since not only are they an important source of knowledge but reliable witnesses who are crucial in achieving successful enforcement action.
- 3.15 The Review Group sought to explore additional practical ways residents can be supported to identify ASB and assist local organisations to tackle it, particularly in an environment of reducing resources. Suggested proposals included pairing up interested community members with middle management officers dealing with ASB in partner agencies. In addition, 'Participatory Appraisal Training' was suggested by the Chair of the London ASB Managers Group as an appropriate methodology that has been effectively used elsewhere, to encourage residents to discuss ASB. 'Participatory Appraisal' is a broad empowerment approach that seeks to build community knowledge and encourages grassroots action. It employs visual methods, making it especially useful for participants who find other methods of participation intimidating or complicated, to gather qualitative and quantitative results. Participatory Appraisal can be used to develop initiatives, and train residents and community champions to challenge local agencies and shape the approach to tackling anti-social behaviour. The Group felt the RSL ASB Forum should consider further a Participatory Appraisal approach.

**Recommendation 4**

**The council, through the RSL ASB forum, investigate a pilot approach to 'Participatory Appraisal Training', in order to support residents to challenge local agencies and shape the approach to tackling anti-social behaviour.**

### **Wider causal factors relating to ASB in the borough**

- 3.16 The Scrutiny Review was focused on issues of reporting ASB and communicating the outcomes of such reporting. As such, the complex issue of what contributes to high levels of ASB was out of scope of the Review Group's work.
- 3.17 Nevertheless the Group noted the significant role of the Youth Service, and specifically related grants which aim to reduce and prevent ASB. The Group felt that the allocation of such funding should be informed by the best available information on the reporting of ASB incidents i.e. the 101 data. This will allow activity to be focused on the areas of greatest need, including ASB hotspots. In addition, this approach will help encourage SLs to advise residents to ensure that all ASB is recorded via the 101 service.

#### **Recommendation 5**

**The allocation of any youth service grants which primarily aim to reduce ASB activity, should be informed by 101 data on the reporting of ASB incidents.**

### **Sustainability of tackling local ASB in an environment of public sector austerity**

- 3.18 Representatives of all agencies highlighted funding pressures and a likely reduction in resources available to support and tackle ASB. The Review Group felt that it would be worthwhile for the council and partners to work together now to explore how local agencies might operate in a future environment of significantly reduced resources. One suggestion, which builds upon the work highlighted by SLs, was the potential role of new technology and social media to support relatively inexpensive ways to both promote reporting of ASB to 101 and receive feedback about how incidents have been addressed.

#### **Recommendation 6**

**The council, through the CSP ASB Strategy Group, brings together the police and housing partners to consider how best the partnership can provide a good service in the context of reducing resources, including exploring social media and new technology to both promote ASB reporting to 101 and feeding back on ASB reports.**