



## **Crime and Disorder: Antisocial behaviour**

### **Introduction**

Anti-social behaviour is defined in the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) as acting 'in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.' This definition includes low-level public order offences and other offences which are notifiable crimes and therefore beyond the remit of National Incident Standard Recording and Assessment (NSIRA).

A more appropriate definition of anti-social behaviour for the purposes of incident recording is provided by the Housing Act (1996): 'Engaging in or threatening to engage in conduct causing or likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to persons engaged in lawful activities'.

From the year ending March 2012, a new set of three simplified categories for ASB were introduced.

- 'Personal' is designed to identify incidents that are deliberately targeted at a particular individual or specific group or aimed at having an impact on a particular individual or specific group rather than the community at large;
- 'Nuisance' captures those incidents where an individual or group causes trouble, annoyance, inconvenience, offence or suffering to people in the local community in general rather than being deliberately targeted at specific individuals or groups; and
- 'Environmental' deals with the interface between people and places. It includes incidents and inconsiderate actions which have an impact on the surroundings including the natural, built and social environments. This category is about encouraging reasonable behaviour whilst managing and protecting various environments so that people can enjoy their own private spaces as well as shared or public spaces.

Bedford Borough Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a joint partnership between the Responsible Authorities consisting of Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire Police, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, The National Probation Service, BeNCH Community Rehabilitation Company and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group who work together to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour that affects our communities. These agencies have a duty to come together and work with other groups, organisations and agencies to prevent crime and disorder. The CSP was formed in response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as a statutory requirement.

The Act also requires each CSP Strategy Group of Responsible Authorities to produce an annual Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment to identify key crime and disorder issues that affect Bedford Borough.

A CSP Strategic Assessment was carried out in September 2016 where ASB was identified as one of three emerging themes. This is a continuation from the previous year's assessment and ASB will be adopted as a CSP priority within the new CSP plan 2017-20, which will be launched in April 2017.

Links to the current CSP Strategic Assessment and CSP plan can be found at the end of this chapter.

### **What do we know?**



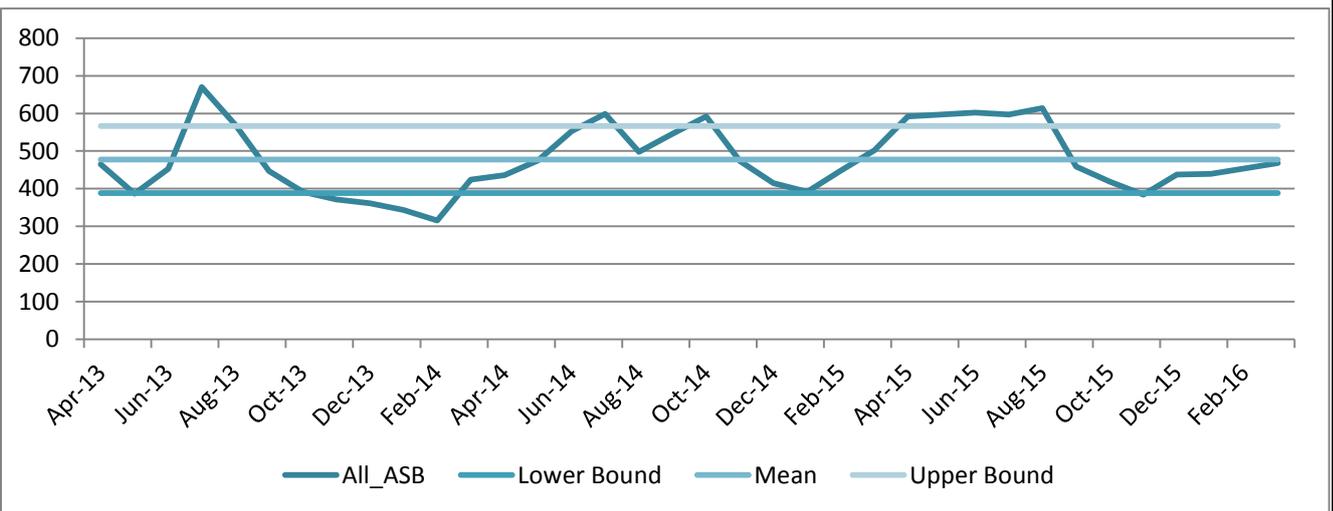
The Borough has a population of 166,300 (2015) which has grown by approximately 12.6% since 2001. Much of that growth has occurred in the rural parishes bordering the urban area where there are several major residential developments underway, including the large new community of Wixams.

In the period Apr 2015 to Mar 2016, Bedfordshire Police received 6063 reported incidents of ASB. This compares to 5929 incidents in the same period in the previous year, an increase of 2.3% (134 Incidents). This slight increase is positive when compared to the significant increase of 14.1% recorded in 2014-15.

- 86.6% of all incidents reported in the year can be attributed to Nuisance ASB; this is an increase of 6.3% (310 incidents) on the previous year.
- Reports of Personal ASB reduced by 21.6% (139 incidents) on the previous year, with reductions in high, medium and standard risk cases.
- Environmental ASB reduced by 10.7% (37 incidents) on the previous year.

In the same period the Bedford Borough Council dedicated ASB Office saw a 50.3% increase in cases, from 144 in 2014/15 to 224 in 2015/16. This increase may in part be explained by the removal of the collocated Police Priority ASB team from Borough Hall, as part of an overall reduction of PCSO within the force.

Reporting tends to follow a distinctive pattern with increased reporting through the lighter and warmer months, and around school holidays. This pattern is consistent with analysis undertaken in previous assessments.



- 40.6% of all reported ASB had a start time between 16:00 – 21:59
- 32.3% of ASB incidents were reported on a Saturday or Sunday
- 31.9% of ASB incident has a start time between 21:00 – 05:59

Within the 3 broad categories ASB can be subdivided into more meaningful classifications that give details about the nature of the event. Each incident is allocated the classification



that best describes the event but it must be accepted that on occasions more than one issue may be present. It is therefore down to the call handler to allocate the most applicable class to each incident.

Over the 12 months incidents were divided into 45 classifications, the table below shows the top 5 recorded in the period. These 5 classifications account for over 80% of all ASB in the Borough.

All ASB - Initial Class (top 5)	2014-15	2015-16	Change	2015-16 % Total
Rowdy or Inconsiderate behaviour	2598	2954	+356	49.0%
Vehicle Nuisance	705	900	+195	14.9%
Abandoned Vehicle Not Tolerated	507	421	-86	7.0%
Nuisance Neighbour	584	358	-124	5.9%
Noise Complaint	317	208	-109	3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4609</b>	<b>4841</b>	<b>+94</b>	<b>80.4%</b>

A number of markers are attached to the incident to give further details about the individuals involved. More than one marker can be applied to an incident.

Qualifier	2014-15	2015-16	Change	2015-16 % Total
Alcohol Related	1036	1170	+134	19.3%
Drugs Related	826	841	+15	13.9%
Sexual Related	66	156	+90	2.6%
Mental Health Related	43	114	+70	1.9%
Alcohol & Drugs	55	69	+14	1.1%
Alcohol & Sexual	15	50	+35	0.8%

Whilst the overall number of ASB incidents in the year rose slightly, significant increases were recorded in most of the markers that are attached to ASB incidents in the most recent performance year. This may be explained, in part, by improved recorded methods that have



been implemented within the Bedfordshire Police contact centre, giving a more accurate record of events. The CSPs continued efforts to raise awareness about the issues of ASB through partnership events and communications may also have resulted in victims of ASB feeling confident to give more detail about their situation.

- 19.3% of ASB incidents have a marker that indicates the event is Youth Related.

This marker indicates that there is evidence to suggest that young people are involved in the incidents; it does not therefore mean that the remaining 80.7% of ASB is committed by adults.

Youth ASB is concentrated in the summer months with 32% of all incidents reported between June and August. Peak times for Youth ASB are throughout the week between 16:00 – 23:00. The three top locations for Youth ASB are; Cauldwell (119), Kempston South (96) and Goldington (91).

- 13.9% of ASB incidents have a marker that indicates the event was Alcohol Related.

Alcohol ASB was slightly higher at two points in the year, in June and December; this is consistent with previous assessments where warmer weather and Christmas see increased levels of drinking. Peak times are Friday to Sunday between 22:00 – 04:00. The three top locations for Alcohol related ASB were Bedford Town Centre (176), Midland Road area (152) and Harpur (130).

- 156 incidents have a marker that indicates that Drugs are relevant to the incident; this is a significant increase from the previous year’s figure of 66.
- 114 incidents have a marker that indicates that Mental Health is relevant to the incident; this is a significant increase from the previous year’s figure of 43.

81.6% of all ASB reported to the Police in the period Apr 15 – Mar 16, took place in urban wards of the Borough.

ASB by Ward (top 5)	2015-16	% Total
Castle Ward (includes Town Centre)	1205	19.9%
Cauldwell Ward	567	9.4%
Harpur Ward	537	8.9%

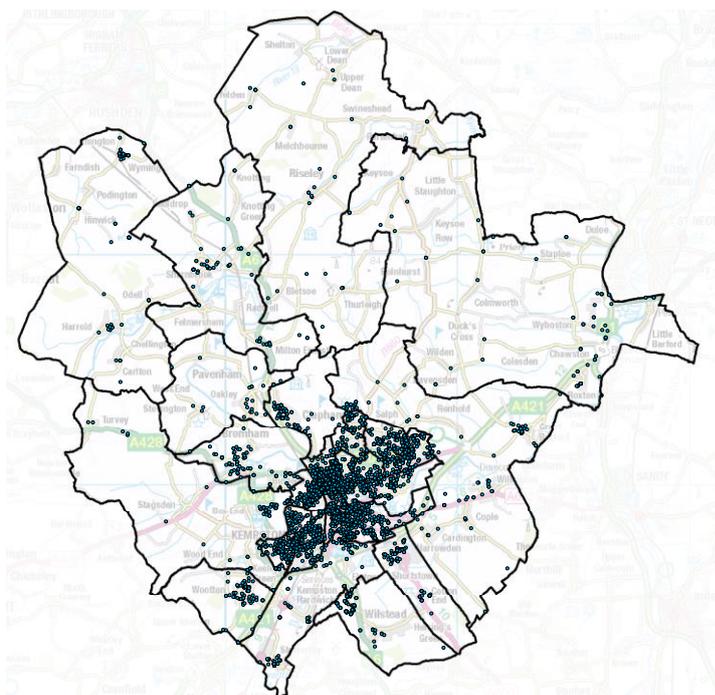


Goldington Ward	370	6.1%
Kingsbrook Ward	360	5.9%
Total	3039	50.1%

Four of these wards include areas identified in the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation as being amongst the 10% most deprived in

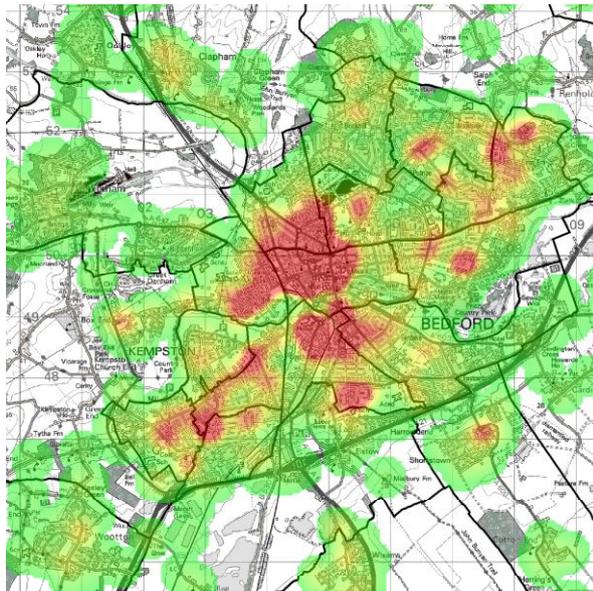
England. (Castle, Cauldwell, Kingsbrook and Harpur)

These five wards are also consistent with high levels of unemployment. They are the top 5 wards for those claiming Job Seekers Allowance for over 12 months according to the Department for Work and Pensions – Oct 15  
The map shows the geographic concentrations of ASB incidents over the urban wards of the Borough, where population density is greatest, but it is also clear that rural areas are affected, particularly the larger villages that are on the periphery of the town.



The hotspot map shows that not all areas of the top 5 wards are affected by high levels of ASB. Two large hotspots can be seen that spread over a number of ward boundaries.

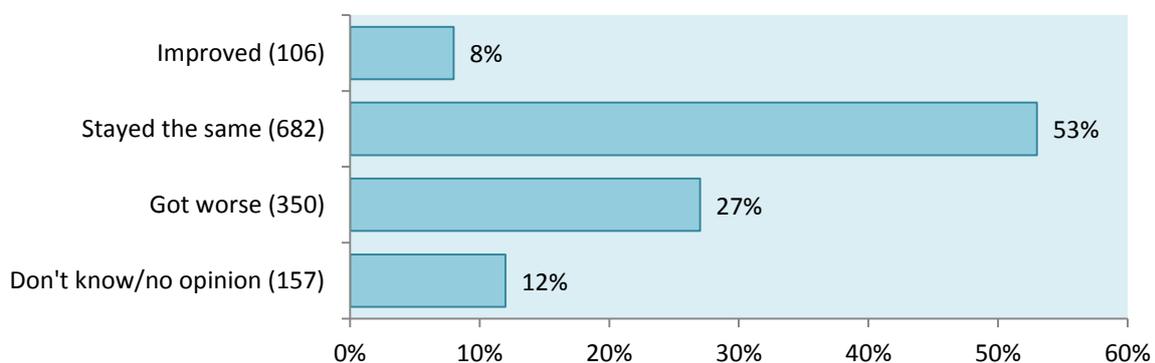
- A large area centred on the Midland Road Area, which spreads in three directions towards The Town Centre, Queens Park and the Tavistock Street end of Harpur.
- A Second slightly smaller area that spans the north of Cauldwell and Kingsbrook.



### Local Views

In a recent Community Consultation exercise involving over 1,300 responses, the greatest proportion of residents 61% of residents identified that crime and anti-social behaviour in the Borough had 'Stayed the same' or 'Improved', this is a reduction on the results of the previous year (72%), 27% identifying that it had got worse an increase from the previous year (19%). 12% replied with no opinion or don't know.

**"Thinking about your local area, 15-20 mins walk from where you live, how has crime and anti-social behaviour changed over the past year?"**



Within the same consultation exercise, 691 respondents (54%) selected Rowdy and Inconsiderate behaviour as one of their top ten community safety Concerns. This was the third highest scoring issue identified in the survey, after Drug Dealing and taking 63% and

Burglary 58%.

### **Current Activities and Services**

On a day to day basis the majority of ASB reports are managed through the police using the non-emergency 101 system. In addition there are a number of Council services to support victims of ASB including local councillors, the Borough's ASB team, Environmental Health team and Enviro-Crime team. These can be accessed 'on line' or via the Council's Contact Centre.

Communities may also choose to report to a Housing Association or via a range of voluntary organisations for help and support and access their details via the 'on line' family support database.

Victims of ASB may also seek advice about issues with their GP or other health support services.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour Management Group**

The ASB Management Group (ASBMG) operates as a risk assessment conference where agencies can discuss and share information relating to specific higher risk victims of ASB. The group has been operating in the Borough since July 2012, with 128 cases discussed to date. In the period Apr 2015 – Mar 2016, 26 cases have been brought to the group which is an increase from the previous year (22).

The ASBMG membership includes members from Adult and Child Safeguarding to ensure that appropriate referrals are made using both Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SOVA) and Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) practice and procedures where needed. A proportion of victims and offenders on the ASBMG caseload demonstrate signs of having health (including mental health) needs and by using the SOVA route into Health Services the relevant checks can be made and needs assessed.

The group aims to reduce the risk of harm for each victim and offers the support of a Vulnerable Victim Caseworker to help victims cope with some of the issues. The type of support offered includes practical and emotional help including making appointments with their GP, CAB, drug & alcohol services, accommodation services or just listening and



advising, keeping them updated with a case and offering mediation with neighbours if needed.

### **Victim Support ASB Vulnerable Victims Worker**

This is a dedicated role that is based within the Community Safety Team at the Borough to offer practical and emotional support to victims of ASB. The service looks to support victims of repeat offences, individuals with learning disabilities and mental health needs.

In the period between Apr 2015 and Mar 2016 the case worker opened 34 new cases, an increase of 11.3% on the previous year.

- 14.7% of victims scored as High Risk
- 38.2% of victims required support for a mental health issue
- 14.7% of victims reported that ASB was having an impact on their physical health
- 1 victim is affected from a learning disability

The most common ASB issues reported by the group related to Harassment and Intimidation (13 cases), the second was Nuisance Neighbours (6 cases)

### **Community Tasking Action Group CTAG**

The CTAG operates monthly to consider tactical options to target short to medium term ASB issues within the Borough. The group has representation from both statutory and local third sector partners that can offer professional and practical solutions to priority areas identified by community intelligence.

The group focuses on geographic ASB hotspots, which often affect a whole community; vulnerable victims within the area may also be referred to the ASBMG process and offered support from the Victim Support ASB worker.

Priority cases are recorded on the Police SafetyNet system which can be accessed by the Borough ASB team.

### **National & Local Strategies (Current best practices)**

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 brought significant changes to the way local authorities can respond to anti-social behaviour (ASB), introducing new tools and powers to replace existing provisions, including the introduction of ASB case reviews, also



known as the 'community trigger'.

Results from the Crime Survey for England and Wales 2015 suggest that 28% of the population have experienced ASB in their local area; this is consistent with the previous year's data. Increases were recorded in the number of people experiencing issues with nuisance vehicles and people using or dealing drugs. However what is understood by the term ASB can be confusing. Often the boundaries between crime and disorder are not clear to the victim. It is likely someone can experience an ASB incident without necessarily believing that it is part of a problem in their area, if it is an isolated occurrence, for example. The frequency or number of incidents and the seriousness of a problem will vary from person to person.

### **What is this telling us?**

- Older people (particularly women) are more likely to worry about ASB and crime. Bedford Borough's population is ageing. While the overall population is forecast to rise by 9.7% between 2015 and 2023, the 65+ population is forecast to increase by 16%, and the 85+ population by 26%.
- There are specific locations where ASB levels are consistently higher. These include the Town Centre and Castle, Cauldwell, Harpur, Goldington and Kingsbrook Wards. The CSP will concentrate its community engagement in these areas.
- 19.3% of ASB incidents are recorded as being youth related and 13.9% involving alcohol (but not together). The CSP Strategic Assessment suggests that youth related disorder is focused in specific areas rather than against specific individuals and is not as prominent as ASB committed by adults. The Town Centre is a focus for ASB in relation to the night time economy and alcohol related ASB and crime. The delivery of the Alcohol Strategy is helping to tackle alcohol related issues and has a dedicated group in place to address Street Drinking.
- The level of victim vulnerability reduces when 1 to 1 support is given such as attending appointments, filling out forms, talking on the phone, and signposting to other support agencies. Work with Victim Support to sustain this service over 2016 - 2017 will be progressed.

### **What are the key inequalities?**

Using data from a survey of 10,000 victims of anti-social behaviour, carried out in 2012, a research team led by Professor Martin Innes (Director of UPSI and Deputy Director at the Cardiff School of Social Sciences) has profiled victims' vulnerabilities in order to better understand how, why and where certain disorder incidents occur, and their effects on the



individuals targeted.

The research found that the risk of harm for ASB victims depended upon three factors: the nature of the ASB and whether it was personally targeted, victim personal characteristics such as their health, and the make-up of their local area.

National research identifies that individuals with physical disabilities and those with mental health issues are more likely to be victims of ASB

### **What are the unmet needs/ service gaps?**

#### **Recommendations**

See Bedford CSP Strategic Assessment 2015: (2016 assessment will be added to the site in next few weeks)

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/community\\_and\\_living/community\\_services/community\\_safety.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/community_and_living/community_services/community_safety.aspx)

#### **This chapter links to the following chapters in the JSNA:**

- [Alcohol](#)
- [Offenders in the Community](#)
- [Drug Misuse](#)

#### **References:**

Personal, Situational and Incidental Vulnerabilities to ASB Harm: a follow up study.

Dr Helen Innes & Professor Martin Innes - A report to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, January 2013 (available at: <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/publication/personal-situational-and-incident-vulnerabilities-to-anti-social-behaviour-harm-a-follow-up-study/> last accessed 20 January 2013)

Follow the Bedford Borough Council Website link below for the following documents:

- Bedford Community Safety Plan 2017-20 (will be launched in April 2017)
- Bedford CSP Community Survey Results 2016 (will be published In Spring 2017)
- Bedford Borough Anti-Social Behaviour Policy
- Bedford CSP Strategic Assessment 2016

#### **This chapter links to the following chapter in the JSNA:**

