Re-thinking the policing of anti-social behaviour

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study develops an evidence-led perspective on the police response to anti-social behaviour (ASB). By starting with the views of victims and the public about the effectiveness of the police management of ASB and working back from these, the research is able to develop new insights in terms of what the police can do to reduce the social harm caused by ASB within and across communities. It is based upon an analysis integrating data from a survey of 5699 ASB victims, the British Crime Survey and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's assessment of police system quality.

The analysis identifies two major issues for the police in that:

- Aspects of the systems and processes used in many police forces for managing ASB have a negative impact upon victims and the public. In particular, where police seek to manage demand for their services through a robust 'graded response' policy, this can be interpreted very negatively by the public when they call the police about ASB issues.
- Relatedly, some community safety partnerships appear to be too inward facing and are failing to deliver services that meet the needs of ASB victims in terms of stopping problems in a reasonable time-frame.

These findings directly challenge some key tenets of current thinking about responding to ASB within the police service and across the criminal justice sector.

In addition, the research identifies 'what works' in managing ASB. Those police forces who performed best in the eyes of ASB victims and the public:

- Brief Neighbourhood Policing teams, response officers and CID thoroughly about ASB issues, and specific local problems;
- Use systematic intelligence processes to manage and co-ordinate their responses to ASB;
- Ensure that Neighbourhood Policing teams are equipped and resourced to engage in tactical and strategic problem-solving of ASB issues.

When people bring ASB to the attention of the police, more often than not, it is because it is harming them, and they want someone to take action to stop it and quickly. There is a clear and consistent pattern of evidence that where police do not attend and respond adequately to ASB issues this has a strongly negative impact upon public confidence and satisfaction.

The public clearly identifies ASB as a policing issue and overall it can be estimated that about 45% of all calls made by the public to the police relate to ASB. Equally importantly, the research finds that the public do not draw clear distinctions between crime and anti-social behaviour. Rather they attend to issues on the basis of whether they impact upon their individual or collective security.

A key finding of the analysis is that such individual or collective impacts are far more likely to be elicited where people are repeatedly exposed to ASB. This is particularly so where the problems are more personally directed and where an element of intimidation is present. However, the overall harm caused by ASB depends, in part, upon the situation of the individuals and groups encountering it. People self-defining as disabled, or who report a long-term health condition, are far more susceptible to being harmed by ASB. Likewise, neighbourhoods and communities that are already under 'stress' from other social forces (such as high levels of socio-economic deprivation, or high crime rates) also evince a greater likelihood of being negatively impacted by ASB.

Of course there are variations between areas in terms of the overall prevalence of ASB and the harm it causes. The figure below summarises the national picture, with those police force areas shaded red having the highest rates of reporting and recording.

Reported Incidents of ASB
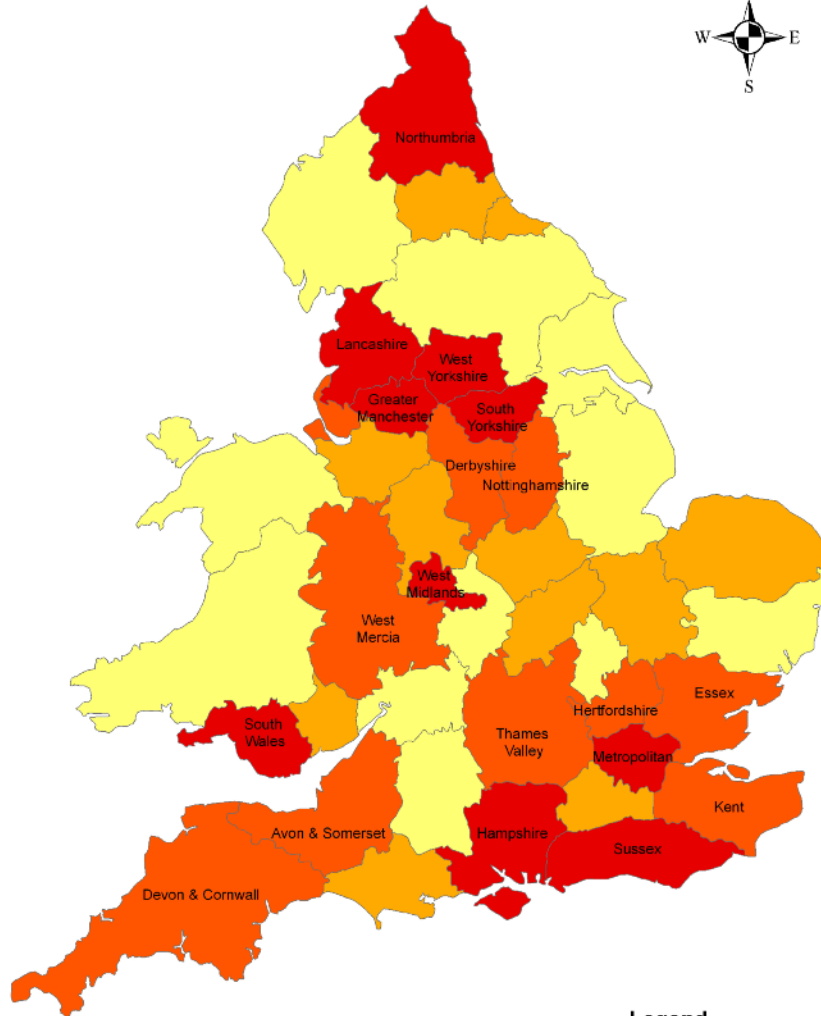
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- 46940 - 66283
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- 97561 - 419765
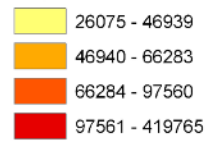
Source: HMIC Recorded ASB (2009-10)

Informed by the evidence, the perspective outlined maintains that ASB is important because of the impacts it has upon individuals, but also levels of neighbourhood security and community safety. Both individuals and neighbourhoods can be said to be victims of ASB. A strong theme emerging from the research is that ASB can corrode the social relations and networks that shape a community's overall vitality and sense of well-being. For example, the graph below shows that members of the public who have encountered four or more incidents of ASB have significantly lower community cohesion and confidence in the police, compared with people who have no direct experience of ASB.
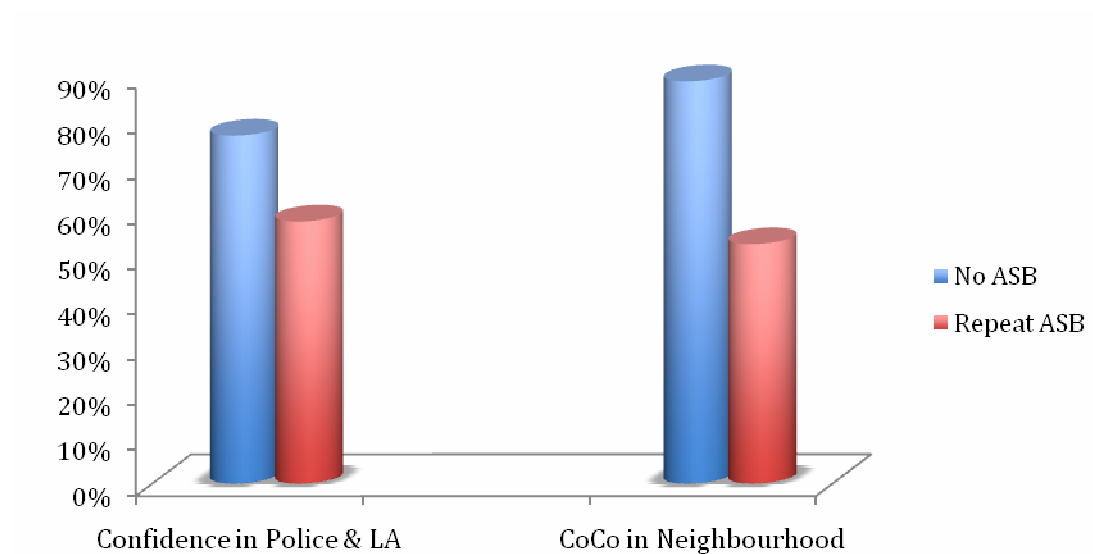
The significance of this finding is that it starts to demarcate the connectivity that exists between the policing of ASB and the overall health and resilience of neighbourhoods and communities. Accordingly, informed by the research evidence, the report identifies three areas where current responses to ASB need to be reconfigured:

1) **Too much time and effort has gone into constructing increasingly technical definitions of ASB.** A more profitable way of ensuring that service delivery improves public facing outcomes is to operationalise a 'social harm' based metric. Rather than worrying about whether something is a crime or a disorder, or what precise type of disorder it is, police should be encouraged to start by establishing whether the event concerned is causing significant harm to individual or public interests. If so, they should seek to do something about it. Attending to the harm and impacts of problems in this way can be effected through application of the Signal Crimes Perspective methodology.

2) **Police systems and processes for responding to ASB have become over-engineered.** There is strong evidence from the research that what victims value is a 'boots on the ground' response that finds ways to stop a problem as quickly as possible. Albeit more tentatively, the study also suggests that there may be a need to re-balance other parts of the approach being implemented by police and Community Safety Partnerships. In some areas it appears that too much reliance is being placed upon longer term problem-solving based interventions, without properly considering the implications of these for public facing outcomes. More effort should be directed towards developing effective fast-time responses and to ensuring that all activity supports key public-facing outcomes. There is a strong case for conducting further more detailed research into the relative performance and cost-effectiveness of partnership working and its methods.

3) **Policing and the effective management of ASB can be an agent for community mobilisation.** Effective policing of ASB is important because of the role it has in shaping the overall health, efficacy and resilience of neighbourhoods and communities. Controlling ASB through effective police action is important in terms of being able to realise the government's stated desire to foster the 'big society.' The police's role in such efforts is about 'gripping' those social problems that corrode mutual trust and cohesion to create a 'space' where civic society can flourish and establish itself. There are important lessons to be gleaned about how policing can co-produce solutions to neighbourhood problems by working with the public from the National Reassurance Policing Programme that ran between 2003-5.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

> "Something that ought not to be happening and about which someone had better do something NOW."[1]

The police are frequently called upon to act as the public's emergency service of first resort. This is because they afford the capacity for quick and decisive interventions across a range of troublesome and problematic situations. Indeed, for Egon Bittner, one of the most influential commentators on policing, this is the defining quality of the police function in society. Although the police engage in a range of different tasks ranging from preventing and detecting crime, through to managing traffic and neighbourhood peace-keeping. Their essential public value resides in the capacity they provide for the emergency maintenance of social order.

Each year the public contacts the forty-three police forces in England and Wales around 7,780,500 times to report a variety of troublesome and problematic people and situations. Of these contacts, about 45 percent relate to matters that can be variously categorised as anti-social behaviour (ASB), disorder or incivilities. Given the volume of these reports it is perhaps surprising that, to date, very little systematic research has been conducted focusing upon how police and other agencies respond to them, and 'what works' in meeting public needs. That this is so is symptomatic of a wider problem where, as an area of public policy, debate and development around ASB has been characterised by more 'heat' than 'light'. This tendency to speculation and rumination, rather than evidence-led illumination is attributable to three main limitations:

1) ASB is a conceptually imprecise notion, covering a vast range of problematic and troublesome behaviours. It is routinely applied as a label to very different kinds of issues ranging from de facto crimes, through to the physical detritus of acts that constitute a nuisance, but may not necessarily be criminal.
2) The public and policy focus has tended to be upon offenders and legislative powers to control them. Less work has attended to the impacts of ASB upon individuals and communities, and what works in reducing the harm caused to them.
3) The whole area has been suffused by normative considerations, and morally freighted opinions about what should and could be done. This has been at the expense of a more measured and careful examination of the effectiveness of different interventions

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[1] P.30 Bittner, E. (1974) 'Florence Nightingale in pursuit of Willie Sutton: A Theory of the Police', in H. Jacob (ed.) The Potential for Reform of Criminal Justice. Beverly Hills: Sage. Emphasis added.

Research Aims

Set against this backdrop, the aim of this study has been to take a 'colder', more dispassionate look at ASB and current approaches to managing it. Fundamentally, it seeks to develop a more evidence-led approach to understanding the impacts of ASB and what works in reducing the harm it causes. As such, the research has been guided by three key questions:

- Why does ASB matter and to whom?
- How effective are current responses provided to ASB from the perspective of victims?
- What can be done to improve responses and reduce the social harm caused by ASB?

In engaging with these questions, the research has adopted an avowedly victim- and citizen-focused approach. It is less interested in the intricacies of the systems, processes and powers that are operationalised by police and other agencies, than the outcomes delivered for the public.

This accent upon public outcomes is in contrast to previous approaches, where performance has tended to be gauged by the 'outputs' of various criminal justice interventions, such as the number of ASBOs or ABCs issued. However, such measures often neglect to consider whether the problem itself was actually stopped, or perhaps more significantly, should it have been prevented from getting this serious in the first place. As will be detailed later in this report, the research evidence assembled by this study supports this more public-facing approach. For it suggests that some ASB management systems appear to have become over-engineered and in the process lost sight of the most important question - do they actually reduce the harm caused by ASB?

Overview of Data and Method

The evidence generated to address the research questions has been drawn from three main sources:

- **The British Crime Survey 2008/09**.[2] The British Crime Survey interviews approximately 40,000 members of the public each year. Respondents are asked a series of questions about their perceptions of ASB and experiences of policing. These data have been analysed as part of this research to identify patterns in the prevalence of ASB, its effects on public perceptions, and public views on the adequacy of police and local authority responses. In

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[2] Owing to changes made to the questions asked in the BCS 2008/09, on a small number of occasions reference is made to the 2007/08 survey.

effect, this aspect of the research affords an insight into the impacts of ASB on the general public, and within and across particular communities;

- **A specially commissioned survey of 5699 victims of ASB conducted by IPSOS-MORI**. During September 2009 a telephone survey of people who had phoned the police to report ASB was conducted in all 43 police force areas. These data provide more detailed insights into the experiences and views of people who have reported ASB of different kinds to the police. The full results of this survey are reported in a separate document. Herein, they are used in conjunction with indicators derived from the other two data-streams;

- **HMIC inspection data on police system quality for managing ASB**. During early 2010, HMIC conducted an in-depth inspection of all forces in England and Wales. The 'system quality' of each force was inspected across 38 domains, derived from earlier pilot work conducted the previous year. These domains covered all areas of response including: initial call-handling; initial attendance; organisational management structures; case management; interventions; and aftercare services. Again, these data are reported more fully separately, but add value to this report in terms of how they can be analysed in conjunction with the other datasets.

Drawing upon these different data streams and integrating them is important because they afford different insights into why ASB matters to people, and how, from a strategic perspective we can deconstruct the overall problem into different parts that are amenable to particular treatments. This is vital because, viewed at a national level, the scale of the ASB problem to be addressed is daunting. However, what these data suggest is that we can segment the public according to their actual experience of ASB and their perceptions of it.

- *Unaffected* - There is a section of the population for whom ASB is not a problem impacting directly upon their lives. Based upon the BCS data we would estimate about 30% of the population in England and Wales can be categorised in this way.

- *Worried well* – A second group express anxiety and concern about ASB even though their actual exposure to it in reality is limited. Typically, such individuals tend to live in more affluent areas and to be over 60. Giving voice to their concerns about ASB articulates deeper insecurities about society and social order. An appropriate treatment regime for this group is the use of

'perceptual interventions' and reassurance to try and align their subjective concerns more coherently with actual experience.[3]

- *Collective indirect victims* – These people have a moderate exposure to particular types of ASB. They actually encounter a range of ASB problems fairly regularly, but they tend to be issues that are not interpreted as constituting some form of personally targeted threat. So for these individuals ASB impacts upon their neighbourhood quality of life and community relations. It is hypothesised that these ASB encounters are less likely to be reported to the authorities.
- *Personal threat victims* – For some people though, ASB is experienced more directly and intensely. This can often arise through repeated exposure to problems and/or where the issue concerned is targeted towards particular groups or individuals. People in these situations are more likely to try and report their victimisation to the police or other authorities.

Segmenting the population in this way starts to map out a 'hierarchy of ASB needs'. This is distinct from the demands for service that the police are exposed to. The worried well may make considerable demands for ASB services to address their concerns. But the most pressing needs may lie elsewhere. In terms of the personal threat victim group, they may require an emergency response to their calls for service in order for the problem to be stopped immediately. In contrast, the problems of indirectly, but collectively victimised groups can probably be addressed in slower time.

This report is organised around three further sections. The next focuses upon what we know about ASB and why it matters from the public's point of view. A particular concern addressed is how we can develop metrics that adequately capture and articulate the harm ASB causes. Informed by the data collected by HMIC, this is followed by an extended analysis of the quality of police systems and processes for responding to ASB issues. In effect, this focuses upon assessing interventions designed to reduce the prevalence and harm of ASB. Importantly, an attempt is made to establish what aspects of the police response directly improve victim satisfaction and public perceptions. This focus feeds into the penultimate section of the report, which seeks to establish what can be done in terms of improving responses to ASB by police and other agencies.

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[3] The concept and application of 'perceptual interventions' to reassure people is detailed in, Ditton, J. and M. Innes (2005) "Perceptual intervention and its role in the management of crime fear" in N. Tilley (ed.) The Handbook of Crime Prevention. Cullompton: Willan

MEASURING THE HARM OF ASB AND WHY IT MATTERS

According to the British Crime Survey 2008/09, around 70% of the population perceive that 3 or more ASB issues are a problem in their neighbourhood. In the previous year of the survey an additional question was asked of respondents, relating to whether they had 'witnessed some form of ASB in the past twelve months?' To which, 44% of those questioned replied that they had.

When asked about local problems in their area, respondents to the 2008/09 survey identified the following top five issues:

1) 20% of respondents identified teenagers hanging around as a problem;
2) 20% of respondents identified rubbish and litter as a problem;
3) 18% of respondents identified vandalism as a problem;
4) 17% of respondents identified drunk and rowdy behaviour as a problem;
5) 16% of respondents identified drug use or drug dealing as a problem.

These figures support the contention that ASB is an issue that has a widespread reach across public perceptions and attitudes. However, 72% of individuals who were exposed to ASB did not report this to anyone.[4] When people do report such problems, this is most likely to be to the police, confirming the sentiments outlined in the opening paragraph of this report.

Nation-wide Comparisons

The rate at which people report ASB problems to the police varies according to a range of factors that will be detailed later. However, reported ASB does provide one useful measure of prevalence. In Figure 1 below, reported ASB is displayed nationally by police force area. Those areas with the highest number of reports for ASB are shaded red, and those with the lowest light yellow. In effect this helps to visualize at a national level where public demand for something to be done about ASB is most evident.

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[4] This figure is from BCS 2007/08 data as the reporting behaviour item has been withdrawn in the 2008/09 version of the survey.
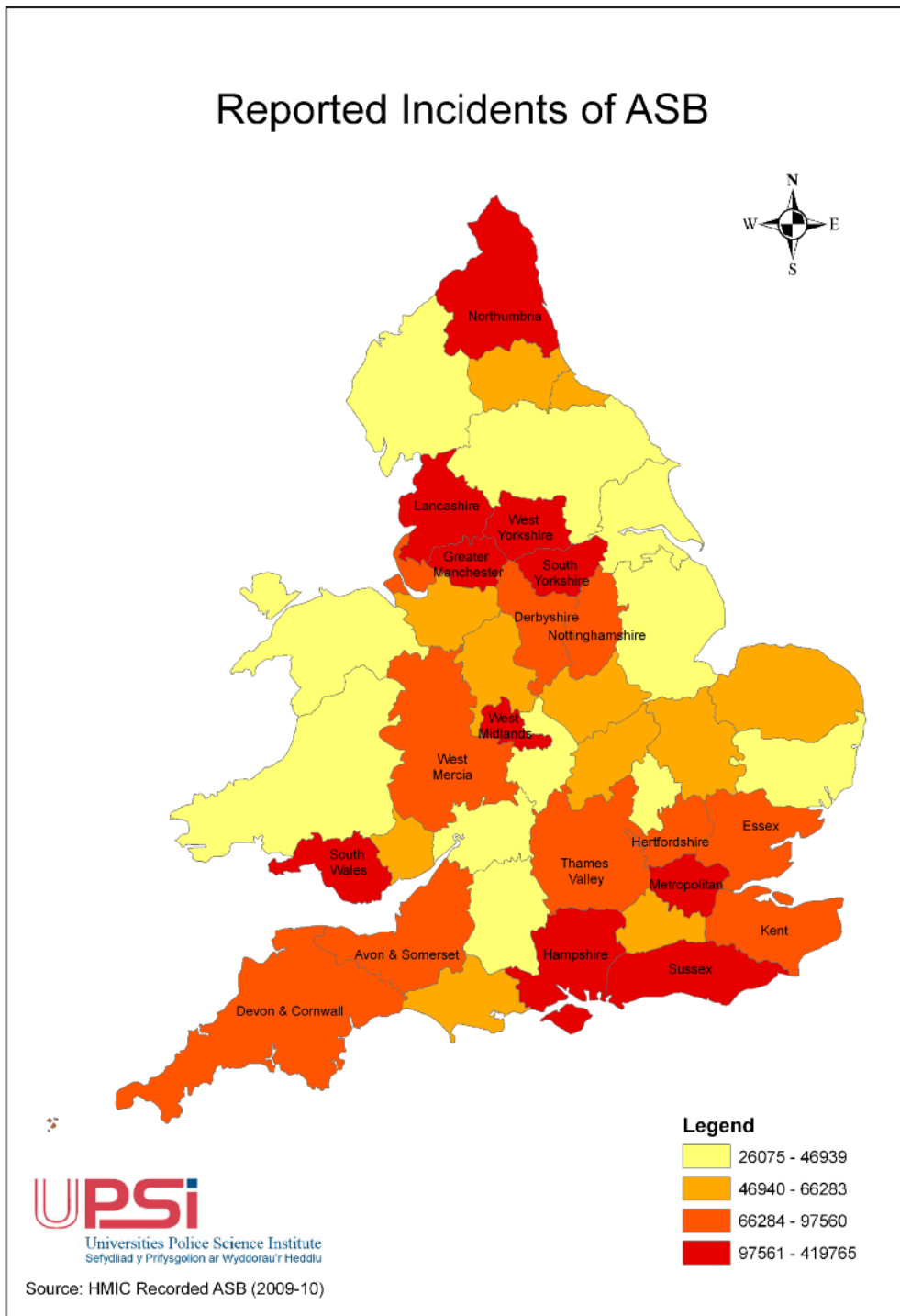
FIGURE 1: ASB Incidents Reported to the Police

The Figure above provides an impression of the 'raw' data. That is, it simply sets out the number of times members of the public contacted each of the forty-three police forces to report ASB issues. As such, it takes no account of the different sizes of the forces or of the different population densities involved. In Figure 2, this has been accounted for. The map displays the ASB reporting rate to police per 1000 residents. As such, it provides a measure of how likely people in different police force areas are to report ASB issues to police.

Compared with the previous map, it can be seen that shifting the focus of analysis to the reporting rate alters the distribution somewhat. Several forces display high numbers of reports and high reporting rates per 1000 residents, but others do not. This may be for several reasons: the problems experienced are less intense and so people do not feel as much need to report them to police; people in some areas are less confident that the police will take any such complaints seriously and act upon them; different communities exhibit different tolerance levels. At the current time, it is not possible to differentiate between these competing explanations. All we can state is that thinking carefully about what measure to use is important.
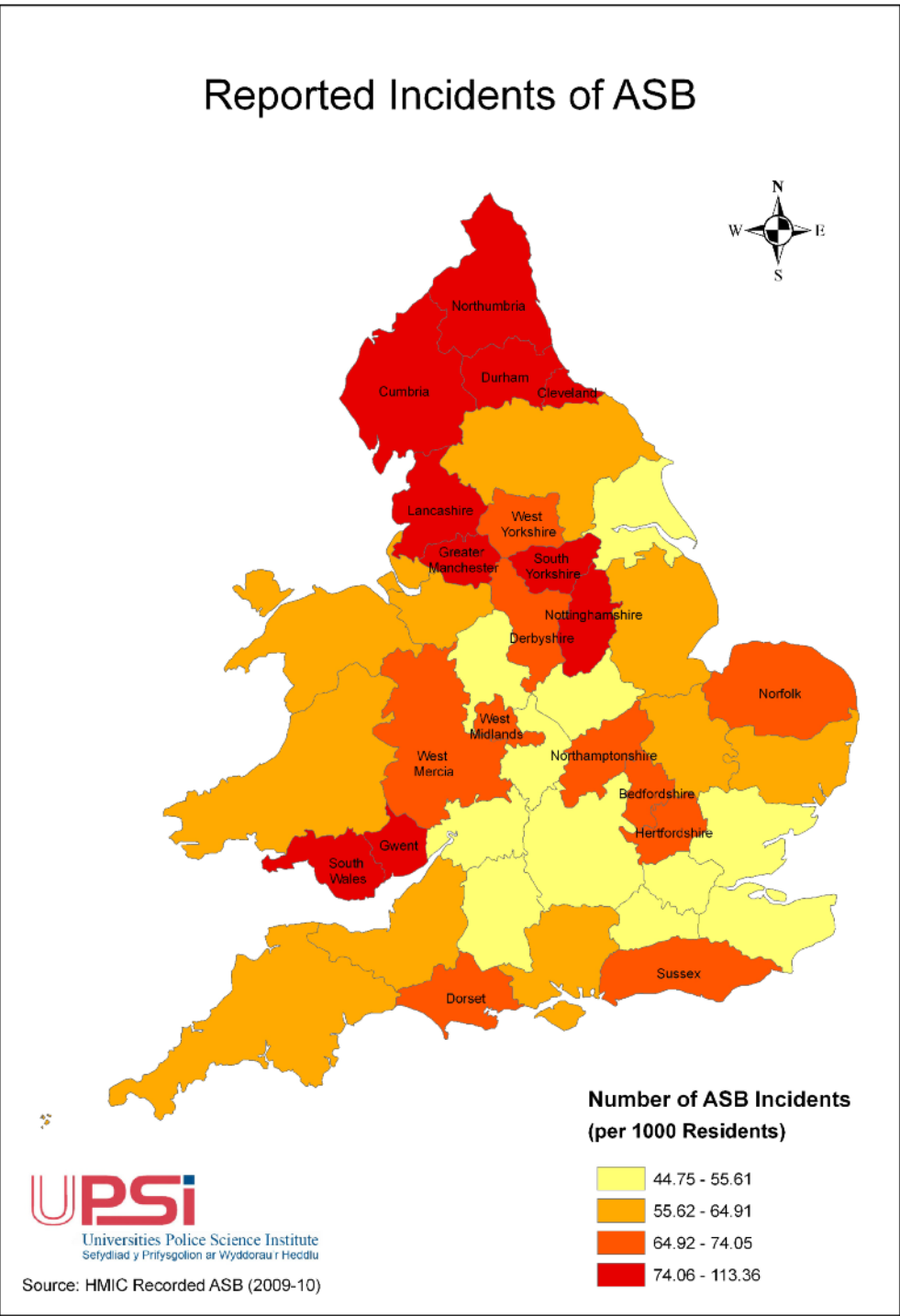
FIGURE 2: Reported ASB Rate Per 1000 Residents

However, as was intimated in the opening sections of this report, in seeking to understand how and why ASB is such an important social problem, we cannot rely solely on what gets reported to the police. Public perceptions of ASB problems can provide an important and different perspective on its scale and distribution. This is on the basis that if people perceive ASB to be high, then this can in and of itself induce negative social consequences, whether or not such perceptions have any basis in reality. Accordingly, the analysis sought to examine the degree of association between public perceptions of ASB problems and reporting to the police. The results of this are displayed in the map below.
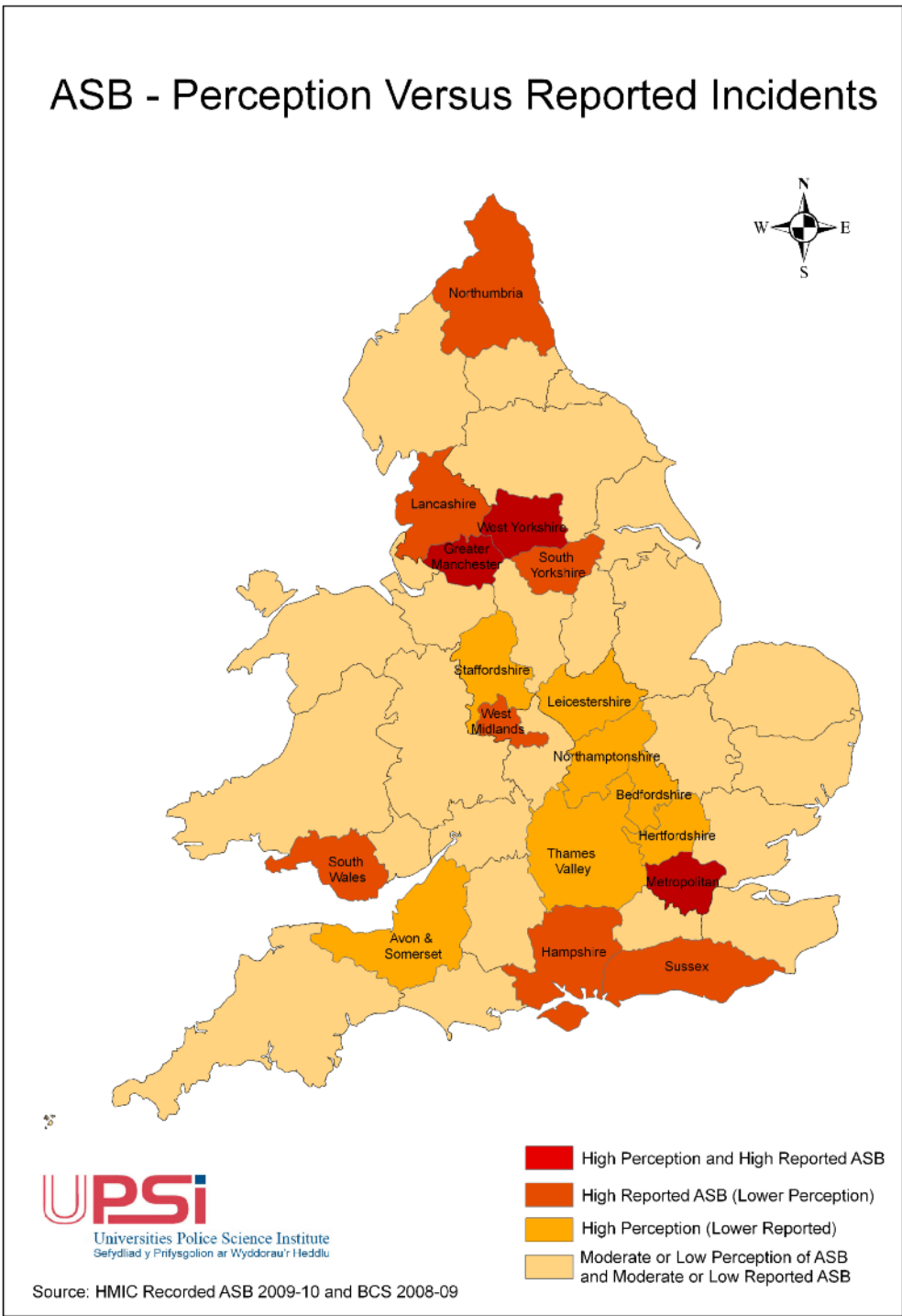
FIGURE 3: The Contrast Between Recorded ASB and Perceptions of ASB

This map shows where perceptions and reporting of ASB are more or less in alignment nationally. Those areas shaded red have relatively high reporting rates for ASB and also have to contend with the fact that many people perceive ASB to be problematic locally. As such, these areas require particular kinds of concerted interventions. Arguably more interesting though are those areas shaded orange and yellow. The yellow areas are where, in effect, perceptions of ASB as measured by the British Crime Survey are out-stripping levels of reporting to the police. In contrast to which, those areas shaded orange denote where reports to the police are comparatively high compared with the number of people perceiving ASB as a pressing problem. These data are helpful in clarifying how adopting different measures can alter the contours of the problem to be engaged.

In addition to evidencing the widespread prevalence of concern about ASB in the general population, collectively these figures illuminate a second quality. ASB functions as a 'plastic' concept that can be stretched and moulded according to the demands of a situation and the person perceiving the 'problematic' behaviour. Looking at the three top categories of ASB listed in the BCS, they range from social disorder, through physical disorder and on to criminal damage. This malleability is both a strength and weakness. Its strength is it enables the label of ASB to be applied to a variety of worrying and threatening acts, whether or not they are defined as 'criminal' in law. The weakness is that there is a lack of clarity about where the boundaries lie, and thus what incidents are and are not warranting of some form of practical response.

The view from the public, as explicated in the BCS, seems to suggest that in their everyday lives, people do not make 'hard and fast' distinctions between crime and anti-social behaviour. Rather, they attend to issues on the basis of outcomes and whether the problems they encounter either directly or indirectly impact upon their quality of life. This directs us to consider what kinds of harm ASB causes.

Calibrating the 'Social Harm Footprints' of ASB
In seeking to construct a measure of the harm caused it is important to differentiate between the number of people who are harmed, and the amount of harm done to each of them. The former we will refer to as the 'scale' of harm, and the latter its 'intensity'. Bringing these two dimensions together enables us to start to outline the 'social harm footprints' associated with different problems. In effect, such an approach identifies three main types of footprint, as summarised in the Table below.

	High Scale	Low Scale
High Intensity	Public Harm – impacts on a lot of people quite significantly.	Personal Harm – impacts upon a few victims but very profoundly.
Low Intensity	Parochial Harm – moderate level impacts across neighbourhoods.	Low Harm – has little impact at all.

TABLE 1: Conceptualising Social Harm Footprints

To empirically test the utility of such a framework we constructed a measure of the 'intensity' of the effects of ASB from the British Crime Survey. This was then related to the number of people who reported exposure to a range of different ASB problems, a measure of the 'scale' of the issues. The results are represented in Figure 4 below.
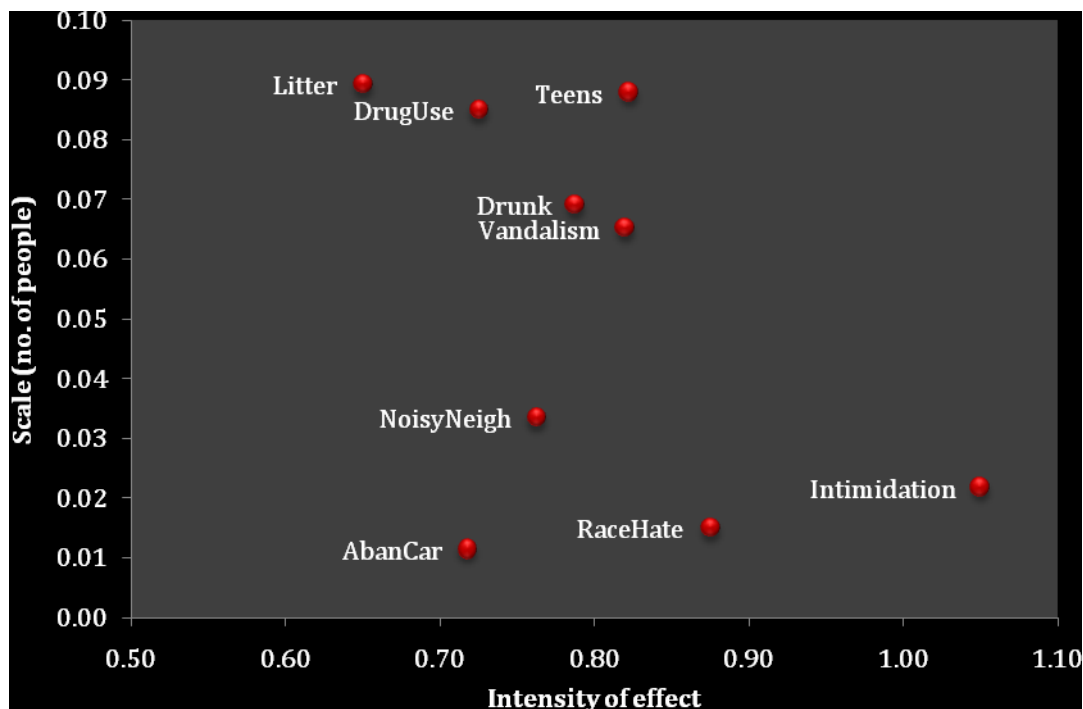
FIGURE 4: The Relative Harms of ASB Problems

Differentiating between the intensity of effect (x-axis) and the scale of its reach in this manner starts to suggest the different harm footprints possessed by particular kinds of ASB problem. The intensity measure for each ASB type was derived by combining the 'confidence in the police', 'fear of crime', 'social cohesion' and 'quality of life' indicators from the BCS 2008/09. An average score for each of the four measures was established independently for all respondents not exposed to ASB (no exposure). This was used as a baseline measure. For each type of ASB, a similar score was then constructed for respondents who said that the issue was a

problem for them. The intensity value was calculated by subtracting the value for those identifying the problem from the mean value for no-problems, creating a difference score. It is this difference score that is displayed in the above figure. This analytic process can be illustrated by taking 'intimidation and pestering' as an example. The baseline figures for each outcome are displayed in the first column of Table 2 below. Intensity scores were then calculated for each individual outcome measure based on the respondents who say that intimidation is a problem for them. The intensity effect is calculated by subtracting the score for that problem from the baseline, as displayed in the third column. To derive the overall harm intensity measure these differences are averaged across all four effects (final line last column).

	Baseline	Intimidation	Intensity Effect
Fear of Crime	1.58	2.31	.73
Confidence	2.61	3.28	.67
Quality of Life	1.28	2.8	1.52
Social Cohesion	2.13	3.41	1.28
Average			1.05

TABLE 2: Calculating the Intensity Effect of Intimidation and Pestering

The scale of the problem (y-axis) shows how many people are affected by the problem, shown as a proportion of the total sample. Thus it can be seen that litter, as a form of environmental disorder, is something that impacts upon a lot of people, but fairly diffusely. Contrastingly, being 'intimidated and pestered' is not something that many people encounter, but those who do are intensely affected by it. Applying the "public/parochial/personal harm" classifications to these data helps to divide them in terms of their relative significance.

	High Scale	Low Scale
High Intensity	Public Harms – Problem teenagers; Drunk and rowdy behaviour; Vandalism.	Personal Harm – Intimidation; Race/hate crime; Noisy neighbours.
Low Intensity	Parochial Harm – Litter; Drug use in public.	Low Harm – Abandoned cars.

TABLE 3: Categorising Harms

Framing the impacts of ASB in this way recognises that ASB problems can be important in different ways. It is not sufficient to talk simply in terms of more or less harm being caused by them. Rather:

- Some issues are important to tackle because they affect a large proportion of the public, albeit relatively diffusely;
- Other problems are important though because they have a targeted and personal quality to them;
- Some forms of ASB corrode the social networks between neighbours and community members, and between citizens and public institutions such as the police.

Configuring the problem of ASB in these terms starts to build a more nuanced knowledge base about what the contours of the problem to be tackled are.

<u>Vulnerability to ASB</u>
Developing the analytic purchase afforded by this framework is important though in that the data suggest that the intensity of the harm caused by ASB is not an 'equal opportunity' phenomenon. Put another way, some individuals and groups are more vulnerable to the effects of ASB and are more likely to be harmed by exposure to it. Analysis of the British Crime Survey finds that:
- Young people are just as likely as older people to identify ASB as a local problem. This counters an oft repeated myth, that concern about ASB simply reflects inter-generational tensions.
- Individuals living in urban and particularly less affluent urban areas are more likely to be repeat victims of ASB and perceive that their area has high levels of ASB;
- These patterns are reinforced and amplified for those living in the social rented housing sector, when compared with residents in the private rented sector and home owners.
- Households with children are more likely to report multiple repeat exposures to ASB compared with those who don't have children. However, those with children do not have higher perceived levels of ASB.

An additional factor emerging from the analysis of vulnerability to the effects of ASB was disability and/or poor health. People who have a disability or a long-term health condition are far more likely to report that ASB has a high impact on their quality of life. Furthermore, people with a disability have less confidence in the police (50%) compared with people who do not self-define as disabled (57%). As such, the analysis identifies disability as a key marker of vulnerability for being harmed by exposure to ASB.

The presence of these patterns is important for our understandings of the social harm footprints attributable to different kinds of ASB problem. For they clarify that some groups of people are particularly vulnerable to the effects of certain kinds of ASB. In an effort to develop further insight into this, a number of the vulnerability amplifying factors were analysed to see how they interact with each other in shaping ASB victims' perceived risk of reprisal, their quality of life and daily routines. Data from the MORI survey were used for this exercise. The results show that four factors, similar to those noted above, emerged as significant in amplifying victims' sense of vulnerability. Not surprisingly, where all four factors are present, victims are rendered most vulnerable to being harmed by ASB. However, it is lower down the rankings that things become more interesting. For what the Figure below conveys is that increased vulnerability does not merely equate to the 'number' of factors in play, rather it is the combination of factors that are more important.

Model Strength (ranking high to low)	No. of Indicators	Repeat Victim	Illness / Disability	Not Working	Lower Social Class
841	4	√	√	√	√
837	3	√	√	√	
817	3	√	√		√
797	2	√	√		
789	3	√		√	√
779	2	√		√	
743	2	√			√
270	3		√	√	√
233	2		√		√
230	2		√	√	
191				√	√

TABLE 4: 'Drivers' of Vulnerability to ASB

The left hand column records the relative strength of the models. Just below half way down the rows of the table a grey shaded section has been included to denote an abrupt change in model strength. This highlights the extent to which repeat victimization is the key factor shaping levels of vulnerability. This becomes particularly acute where people also report a long-term illness, or self-define as disabled.

This analysis potentially has direct practical relevance. It affords a way for police to quickly risk assess members of the public reporting ASB to them, in order to establish the likelihood of them being particularly vulnerable. Effectively, the police need to establish two pieces of information at the point of report:

- Has the person experienced this or other ASB previously?
- Are they currently in ill health, or do they consider themselves disabled?

This risk assessment could be refined through additional questions, but fundamentally the research evidence suggests that asking these two questions would do most of the work in identifying the most vulnerable victims.

The Importance of Repeat Victimisation

In effect, the analysis conducted so far has demonstrated that the overall degree of harm caused by an ASB incident depends upon an interaction between the characteristics and situation of the victim, and the nature of the problem itself. By looking in more detail at the intensity measure of harm it is possible to tease this out in more detail. In Figure 5 below, the impacts of six different types of ASB upon three groups in the IPSOS-MORI survey are contrasted. It can be seen that for single incident victims of ASB, different issues induce different levels of harm. But in nearly all cases, repeat victims experience far higher levels of impact. This is exacerbated and amplified for repeat victims who self-define as disabled and/or suffering ill-health.
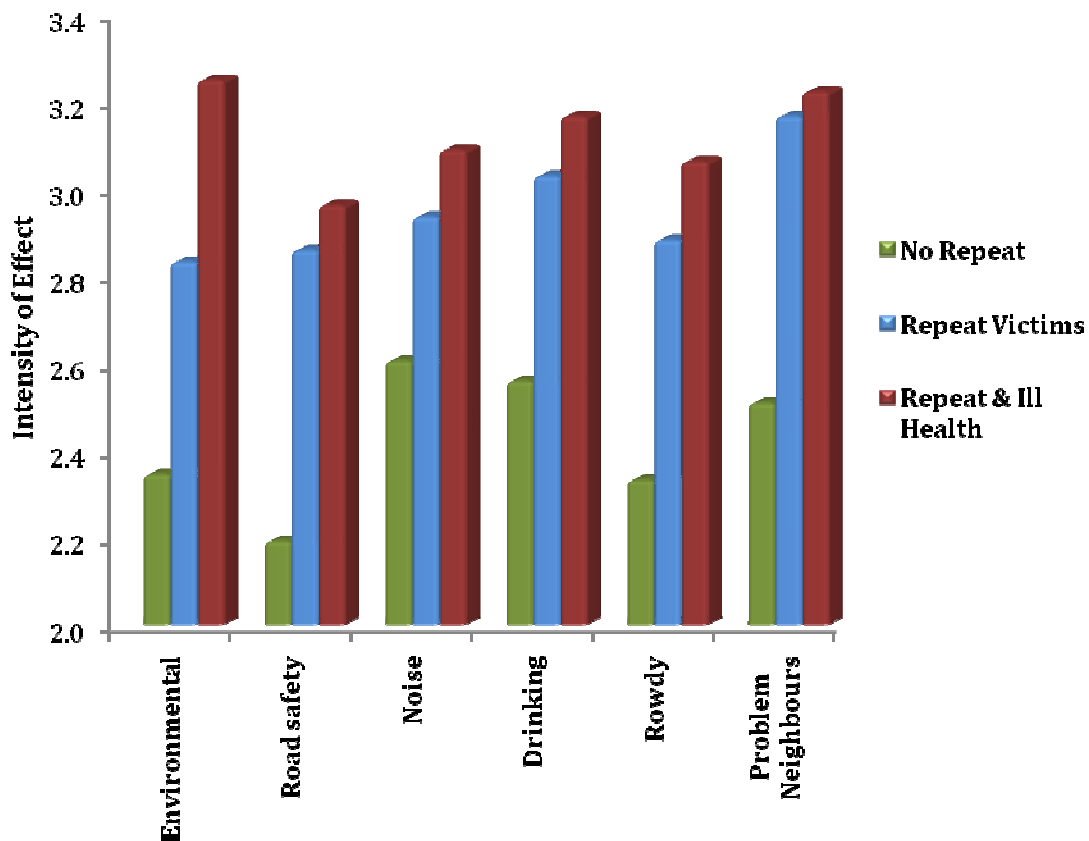
FIGURE 5: Effects of ASB on Different Victim Populations

Analysing the harm caused by ASB has started to unpack the extent to which exposure to ASB can have a significant impact upon peoples' perceptions of individual safety and collective neighbourhood security. According to the BCS data:

- Individuals who perceive higher levels of ASB in their neighbourhood report a greater sense of social isolation than people living in low ASB areas.
- They are isolated from their neighbours in that they tend to report lower levels of community cohesion, including trust in their fellow residents, and collective efficacy (the belief that people will jointly intervene to solve local problems).
- This is reinforced by increased isolation from key public services. People living in comparatively high ASB localities are less likely to report their victimisation to the police and have lower confidence in the police.

This is captured in the graph below comparing people who have not encountered ASB in the last 12 months, with those who have been exposed to four or more incidents, in relation to their confidence in the police and local authority, and community cohesion.

FIGURE 6: The Effects of ASB on Public Facing Outcomes BCS 2008/09

It can be seen that there are significant differences in the views of those people who are repeatedly exposed to ASB when compared with those who are not. There is a twenty percentage point gap in te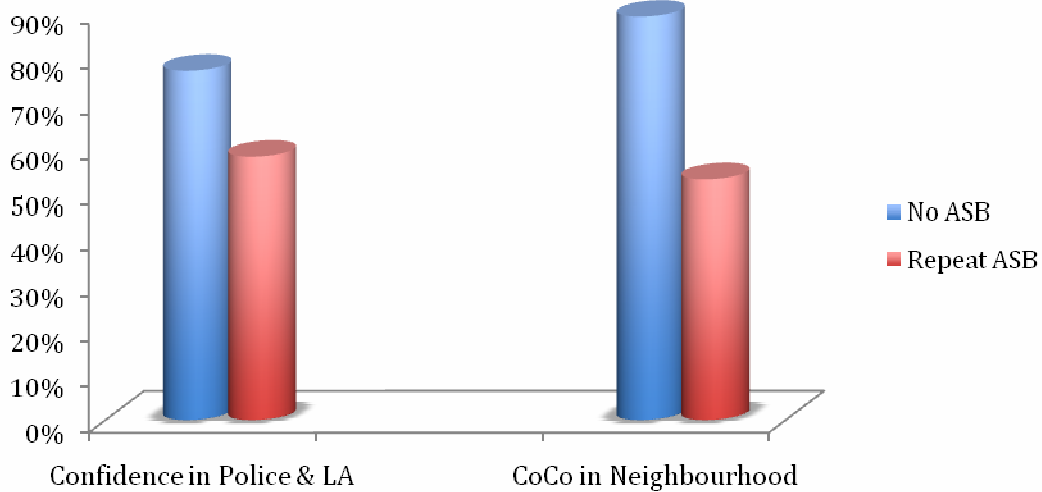rms of the two groups on the confidence measure, and over a thirty point gap in relation to community cohesion. A similar profile is present in respect of fear of crime. Seventy-nine percent of people who had not encountered ASB locally said they felt safe walking alone after dark. This figure drops to sixty four percent for those with multiple ASB exposures. These negative impacts have important implications for understanding public sentiments about current police responses and for thinking about the capacity offered by 'big society' mechanisms to deal with these kinds of social problems.

As intimated in the above chart, public confidence in the police is highly inter-connected with exposure to ASB.[5]Overall, according to the BCS 2007/08:

- 58% of respondents said that they were 'not very confident' or 'not at all confident' in the police's ability to do anything about ASB.
- 71% of respondents said that they were 'not very confident' or 'not at all confident' in the local council's ability to do anything about ASB.

The BCS data clearly shows that repeated exposure to ASB has a negative impact upon confidence in the police. Indeed, as the number of problems experienced increases, so public confidence decreases. This in turn feeds a 'spiral of corroding confidence' where:

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[5] Confidence in the police was measured by the question – "Taking everything into account (including my experience of how anti-social behaviour is dealt with) I have confidence in the police in my area".

- People who have lower confidence in the police are less likely to report ASB; 80% of people with low confidence said that they have not reported incidents to the police compared with 59% who express higher confidence.

The implication of this is that repeated exposure to ASB results in less public confidence in the police. As a consequence of which, fewer problems are reported to the police and the more likely it is that problems will be not be reported at all, or reported to non-police agencies. Consequently, forces that perform poorly in responding to ASB will have less problems reported to them. Over time this means they will have a worsening understanding of the problems in their area and will increasingly lack the knowledge required to enable them to target key problems in an intelligence-led fashion.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

This section of the report has sought to develop an evidence-based perspective on the prevalence, distribution and impacts associated with ASB. This is on the grounds that it is only by having a nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the contours of the problem to be engaged that effective solutions can be designed. By way of conclusion two particular issues are deserving of comment. First, the plasticity of ASB and its use as a 'dustbin concept' where all manner of problematic behaviours can be dumped, does not assist in 'getting a grip' on the problem in practical terms. These conceptual difficulties are reinforced by the lack of reliable data on victimisation. In an effort to solve this problem, the research has used the BCS to address questions of prevalence in the general population. This has been supplemented by a victimisation survey of people who have reported ASB to the police. In part this reflects a limitation of the BCS in that it tends to rely on perception measures, rather than gauging levels of direct and indirect ASB victimisation. Progress in the area would be aided by developing more robust items in the BCS designed to explicitly measure victimisation frequency and intensity.

- People who perceive higher levels of ASB locally tend to be more socially isolated from their neighbours and are less likely to engage with the police.
- The most important factor shaping the level of harm caused by ASB is repeated victimisation or exposure to problems.
- Calculating the 'social harm footprints' of different ASB issues helps to clarify that some problems require addressing because of the personal intensity of the harm caused, whilst others are important because they have widespread public effects.

THE POLICE RESPONSE TO ASB

The previous section evidenced how ASB causes real harm to the resilience and well being of individuals and communities. It was demonstrated how certain factors amplify vulnerability to the negative effects of ASB. In particular, it was identified that being a repeat victim, especially where the incidents are more personally targeted, exacerbates the harm caused. The focus of the report now shifts to examining the effectiveness of current responses to ASB.

Analysis of the BCS suggests that amongst the general public there is a fairly widespread view that ASB problems are not being tackled appropriately by the police and their partners. Respondents were asked what, if any, problems were not being tackled, and these are listed in the figure below.
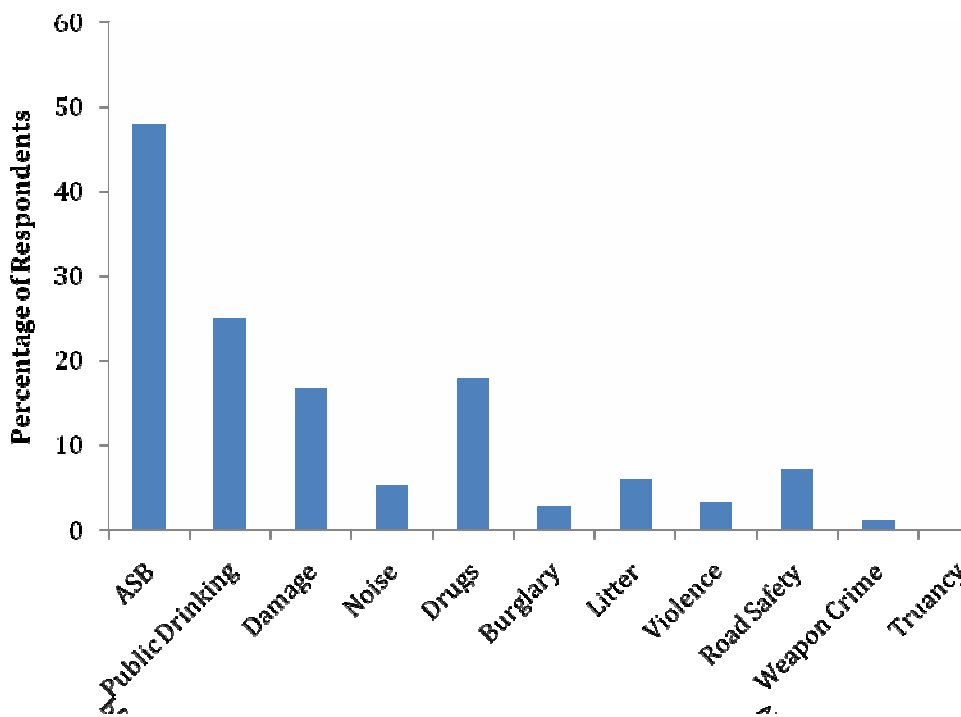
FIGURE 7: Issues Not Being Tackled BCS 2008/09

These data clearly demonstrate that people are more likely to perceive that ASB issues are not being tackled locally than volume or major crime. Nearly fifty percent of respondents stated that they felt that specific ASB issues were not being addressed.

Demand, Supply and Police System Quality

Of course, in part the capacity of individual police organisations to respond to and tackle ASB issues is shaped by the range of demands that they have to meet. Some areas have comparatively high rates of crime when compared with others and this

necessarily impacts upon the resources they have available to deal with ASB. In an effort to unpack these issues a little more, we have sought to categorise the relative demands of ASB at police force area levels, using BCS data 2008/09. This has been set against the latest recorded crime levels. This illuminates two key points:

- Ten forces have comparatively high levels of demand in terms of crime and perceived ASB. This supports a contention that high crime areas are also often afflicted by high levels of disorder;
- There are four forces where ASB is placing relatively more demand on the police, than crime.

		ASB Perceived		
		Higher	Moderate	Lower
Recorded crime per 1000 pop.	Higher	Metropolitan Greater Manchester Nottinghamshire Gwent West Yorkshire West Midlands South Yorkshire Cleveland Merseyside South Wales	Humberside Leicestershire Thames Valley Northamptonshire	
	Moderate	Staffordshire Bedfordshire Durham	Avon and Somerset Hampshire Lancashire Derbyshire Cheshire Gloucestershire	Cambridgeshire Dorset Lincolnshire North Wales Sussex
	Lower	Northumbria	Devon and Cornwall West Mercia Warwickshire Kent	Hertfordshire Suffolk Essex Surrey Norfolk North Yorkshire Wiltshire Cumbria Dyfed Powys

Note: The City of London Police are accounted for in the MET due to limited ASB data

TABLE 6: Recorded Crime and Perceived Levels of ASB

Presenting the data in this fashion starts to convey where, in terms of shaping the public demands for policing services, ASB is intertwined with volume and major crime problems, and where it is potentially a more significant problem (at least in

terms of overall volume) than crime. It also serves to identify those parts of the country where ASB is not necessarily a particularly pressing concern.

However, as was identified in the opening sections of this report, perceptual measures of ASB and reporting rates often provide different perspectives on the prevalence and distribution of issues. Therefore, in order to examine the implications of this insight further, in the Table below the recorded crime and ASB rates for individual forces are compared. Those forces in bold typeface have proportionately higher numbers of people perceiving ASB issues as a problem locally.

		Recorded ASB per 1000 pop.		
		Higher	Moderate	Lower
Recorded crime per 1000 pop.	Higher	**Greater Manchester** **Nottinghamshire** **Gwent** **South Yorkshire** **Cleveland** **South Wales** Northamptonshire	West Yorkshire West Midlands Merseyside	Metropolitan Leicestershire Humberside Thames Valley
	Moderate	**Bedfordshire** **Durham** Lancashire	Derbyshire Dorset Sussex Hampshire Cambridgeshire Avon and Somerset Cheshire	North Wales Lincolnshire Gloucestershire Staffordshire
	Lower	**Northumbria** West Mercia Norfolk Cumbria	Hertfordshire Dyfed Powys Suffolk North Yorkshire	Devon and Cornwall Surrey Wiltshire Kent Warwickshire Essex

TABLE 7: Relationship Between Recorded Crime and Recorded ASB

As can be seen by comparing this Table with the previous one, although there are overall consistencies, the relationship between recorded ASB and crime is slightly different to the relationship between perceived ASB and recorded crime. Northumbria, Durham and Bedfordshire emerge as particularly interesting areas in that they have high perceptions of ASB and high recorded ASB, but moderate to low crime levels. In total, there are seven forces that can be identified where recorded ASB is relatively high compared with recorded crime levels.

The thrust of this analysis can be extended to examine the alignment between the quality of service supplied by the police for managing ASB and the demands for this. In some areas police systems may not be especially robust, but that is less of an issue because the level of demand upon the system is not that great. To examine this issue, data from the HMIC inspection was extracted to construct a relative score of police system quality for all forces. This was then juxtaposed with the level of public demand, based upon the BCS measure of the number of people perceiving ASB as a significant problem.

		ASB Perceived		
		Higher	Moderate	Lower
System Quality	Very High		West Mercia	
	Higher	Merseyside Staffordshire West Midlands West Yorkshire South Yorkshire	Avon and Somerset Lancashire Leicestershire	Cambridgeshire Norfolk North Yorkshire
	Average	Bedfordshire Cleveland Durham Greater Manchester Gwent Metropolitan Northumbria Nottinghamshire South Wales	Cheshire Derbyshire Devon and Cornwall Gloucestershire Hampshire Humberside Kent Northamptonshire Thames Valley Warwickshire	Cumbria Dyfed Powys Essex Lincolnshire North Wales Suffolk Surrey Sussex Wiltshire Hertfordshire
	Lower			Dorset

TABLE 8: System Quality Data From HMIC Inspections Compared With Levels of ASB from 2008/09 BCS

Effectively this helps to make sense of the alignment between supply and demand in respect of the policing of ASB. It can be seen that there are no forces where system quality was adjudged to be low and where demand is high or average. Only one force could be categorized as having a low quality system overall, and in that area the level of ASB does not create a particularly high demand.

Of course, in practice the level of demand is in part an artifact of reporting behaviour. The fact that over two-thirds of the ASB that occurs remains un-reported to the authorities was noted in the opening sections of this report. There are however, important variations present in terms of what is likely to get reported and to whom. The BCS suggests that people rarely report problems with noisy neighbours to the police and are more likely to either deal with it themselves, or report it to another authority such as the council. Youth behaviour and signs of drug use were most likely to be reported to the police, however reporting frequency for these problems is still low at 15%.[6]

The Importance of Police Presence and Attendance

The decision to report for repeat victims is strongly influenced by the quality of first contact and response. Interpreting the available data, it appears that people frequently tolerate an amount of ASB, but then when it reaches a certain level will seek to report it either to the police or another agency. This is a critical moment. If they perceive the response provided as adequate and appropriate, then they are likely to act similarly in the future. However, if the quality of service provided is lacking at this moment, then effectively they will withdraw, often 'suffering in silence' if they experience further problems.

In an effort to establish why victims choose not to report ASB involving the most commonly reported problem (teenagers hanging around), the data were examined and five main reasons were identified:
   1) 20% said they 'don't want to get involved';
   2) 17% said they just 'accept the problem';
   3) 15% thought the 'police wouldn't do anything /not interested';
   4) 13% said it is a 'waste of time';
   5) 12% said they 'feared reprisal'.[7]

Across the three data-streams police action and attendance emerge as critical variables in shaping ASB victims' attitudes and beliefs. Attendance and action is strongly related to satisfaction with the police response. For example, the IPSOS-MORI survey found that the public were aware of action taken by the police on 39% of occasions. On these occasions:
   • 81% of respondents said that they were satisfied with the response they received;
   • This contrasts with how, when no action was taken, 68% of respondents said they were dissatisfied with the response they received when reporting ASB.

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[6] These data are taken from the 2007/08 BCS as the item about reporting behaviour was not included in the 2009/10 survey.
[7] These data are drawn from the HMIC Repeat Victims Survey (n=765) conducted in January 2009.

A similar pattern is evident in relation to confidence in the police. Of those surveyed who expressed higher levels of confidence, 47% recalled that police took action as a result of their call about an ASB problem. This compares with 27% of those who expressed low confidence in the police, who said the police took action. It can thus be inferred that public confidence is statistically related to police decisions to deal with ASB issues.

Action here refers to a number of responses taken by the police with attendance emerging as the most common (56%). These patterns can be interpreted as follows. A policy of non-attendance or no-action to ASB reports is likely to have negative consequences for police satisfaction. Similarly, negative consequences, albeit reduced in quantity, are likely to arise from attending in a manner that the public perceives as ineffectual.

Across the BCS and IPSOS-MORI victim survey there are a number of indicators available to gauge the impacts of police response upon public attitudes and perceptions. Although they differ in respect of specific details, there is a very clear and consistent pattern evident across all of the available measures. Decisions taken by police not to attend ASB reports and failing to intervene effectively in relation to these has a significantly negative impact upon levels of public satisfaction and confidence.

What Aspects of Police Response Shape Public Outcomes
In order to investigate this issue of what works from the point of view of victims in more depth and detail, a series of regression analyses was performed. These analyses sought to understand the capacity of different aspects of the police systems for managing ASB to produce improved victim outcomes (as measured by the IPSOS-MORI survey). Through this process the original 38 domains of police system quality investigated by HMIC were reduced to twelve key aspects that were found to have significant impacts upon outcomes for victims. The outcomes used covered: reporting behaviour; satisfaction with treatment by the police; and then neighbourhood impacts in terms of quality of life, social cohesion and confidence in the police.

A summary of the results of this analysis are provided in Figure 8 below (a more detailed account and explanation of the data labels is provided in the Appendix). This demonstrates that some police system factors have a positive impact upon public facing outcomes. Importantly though, several aspects are identified as having a net negative effect – they make the victim experience worse.
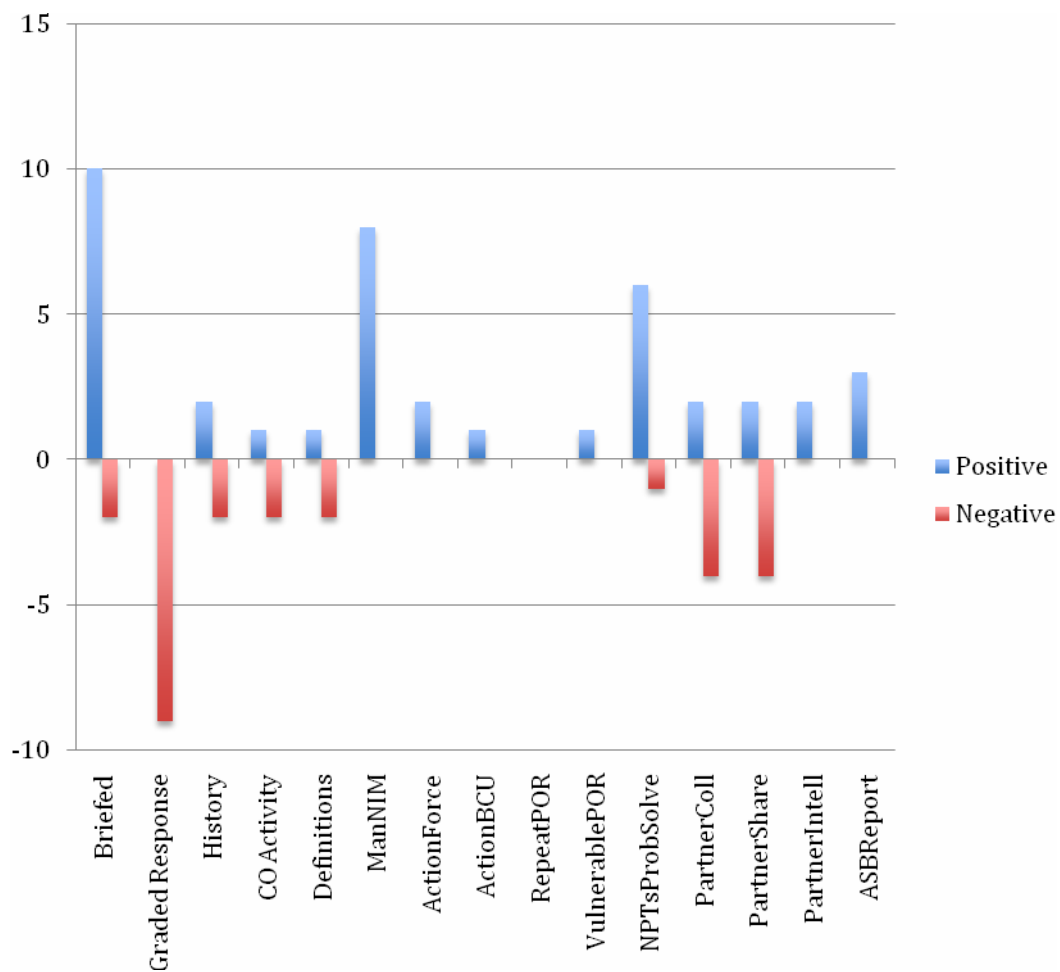
FIGURE 8: Summary of Regression Analysis Showing the Impact of Different System Variables

The full analysis conveys how the effects of particular aspects of the police response can be quite complex for victims, generating benefits in respect of some valued outcomes, whilst simultaneously proving detrimental in respect of others. The summary brings a degree of clarity though, inasmuch as it provides a sense of the aggregate effects of key dimensions of the police system. The summary was constructed by scoring whether the system variable had a relatively strong or weak impact upon each outcome. It can be seen that the most impactive aspects of the police response are:

- Ensuring that NPTs, response officers and CID are thoroughly briefed about ASB issues, and specific local problems;
- Using National Intelligence Model processes to manage responses to ASB;
- Ensuring that NPTs are equipped and resourced to engage in tactical and strategic problem-solving of ASB issues.

This suggests that forces looking to improve their public facing outcomes in relation to ASB could look at these three areas as offering the most likely opportunities for gains to be made. Equally though, the analysis identifies several aspects of police systems that have generally negative impacts upon victims. These are:

- The presence of a strong graded response policy, whereby calls for service from the public are risk assessed and only some are attended;
- Aspects of partnership working seem also to be degrading the quality of outcomes delivered for victims.

Given that these dimensions appear to be inducing negative consequences, they were subject to more detailed investigation. Using the victim survey data, a measure of police action and non-action was derived. This showed that where police attended and took action in some fashion, improved victim outcomes were delivered across several measures, compared to where incidents were not actioned.

Outcome	If action taken by police	If no action taken by police
Confidence in the police and local services	47%	27%
ASB is a problem in the area	59%	69%
ASB has a high impact on Quality of Life	29%	36%
Satisfaction overall (combined measure)	77%	38%

TABLE 9: The Influence of Police Action on Public Perceptions

This Table shows that responding to an ASB call with some form of action results in greater confidence, a reduced perception of ASB and higher quality of life. More intriguingly though, it appears that those forces that do not enforce a graded response policy have the highest response action. Forces assessed as having average systems in terms of response policy acted in response to ASB calls on 42% of occasions compared with 37% and 39% for forces who have 'higher' or 'very high' quality graded response policies. A similar pattern was evident in terms of victims' satisfaction with how they were treated and whether they believed that their call had made a difference to the problem.

Demand Management's Negative Impacts

It should be clarified that the impacts of graded response on outcomes are more complex than the figures suggest. In fact there is a bifurcation of outcomes. Those people who receive some form of active response from the police following a report of ASB, tend to be satisfied. But it is the vast majority of people who are not adjudged as sufficiently vulnerable to warrant a response who register negative outcomes.

On the grounds that attendance and taking immediate action to deal with a problem emerge as important factors from the victim's point of view, an attempt was made to investigate whether the type of intervention made matters. Based upon limited data, the following graph was constructed seeking to measure the relative effectiveness of different types of police interventions, using the MORI survey. Based on three types of intervention 'attending and non-enforcement response', 'arrest or caution' and 'securing an ASBO', the graph displays the percentage of interventions where no further, modest repeats and higher levels of repeat victimization occurred.
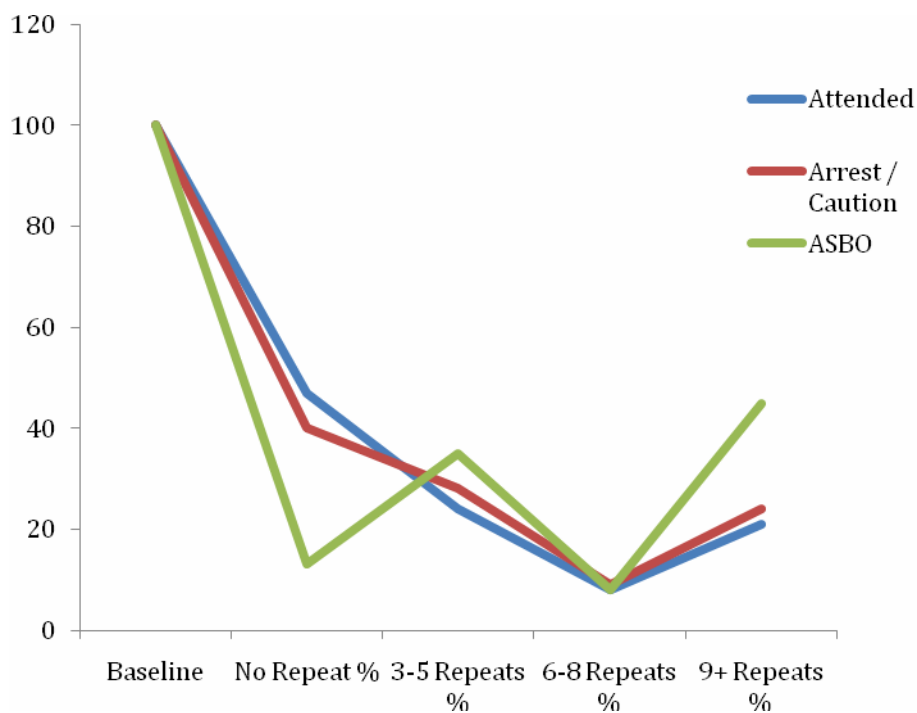

FIGURE 9: Effects of Police Action on Repeat Victimisation

This shows that for over half of all occasions when the police attended and/or took immediate action to stop the problem, not involving an arrest or caution, no further victimization occurred. This compares with an ASBO where only eighteen percent of victims stated the problem ceased completely. It is worth noting that attendance

and non-law enforcement interventions were by far the most regularly employed tactical responses. Police attended ASB incidents on 1190 occasions, which was approximately twice the rate at which they issued cautions or resorted to arrest. Albeit, when they did so, such approaches were comparatively effective in eradicating the problem for a large proportion of victims. In contrast to which only 41 ASBOs were issued. This would tend to confirm the previously noted finding that from the victim's point of view, police attendance providing quick-time interventions, not necessarily involving the exercise of legal powers, often works in stopping the problem. In sum, we are seeing that in terms of dealing with ASB, police presence and the use of discretion to informally resolve problems is being used regularly and fairly effectively by police where they are called by the public and respond.

Grading the response to calls is an approach that the police have used to try and manage public demand over the past two decades. The finding that it is having a perverse effect on public outcomes is important. Indeed, it had been assumed by the HMIC field teams that having a robust and strong grading policy was a desirable quality of police systems. It transpires however, that this aspect of the police response to ASB is actually working against improving the satisfaction of victims and the public across several key outcomes.

Challenging Assumptions About Partnership Working
The second dimension of system quality inducing a negative impact for victims are two aspects of partnership working, namely whether police, councils and other local agencies share information and collaborate to solve ASB problems. Again, we need to clarify precisely what the analysis is and is not suggesting. The regression identifies that there were some forces that had very strong information sharing and collaborative working arrangements, and that these were doing worse across several public outcome measures than those areas where such arrangements were less strong. There are a number of candidate explanations for how and why this should be. First, these measures of system quality focus upon whether partnership working is facilitated, rather than what it is delivering. Secondly, and potentially more significantly, some partnerships may be focusing too much upon networking between agencies and are not sufficiently focused upon public priorities, or involving the public in solving them. In effect, they are overly internally focused, rather than directed towards delivering public facing outcomes.

One small but non-significant effect was found between the sharing of information and local services action in response to ASB. There was a differentiation in victim satisfaction scores depending on whether the force had a system in place allowing them to share information. Those forces that were assessed as having 'higher' or

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'very high' quality systems for sharing information received the worst satisfaction ratings if the council took action, 27% and 21% respectively. Forces rated as average for information sharing received the lowest dissatisfaction ratings as judged by whether they felt the police handled their call well (19%). Speculation as to the reason for this is that forces that do not have sharing systems in place deal with the report themselves, leading to more action (as shown above). In contrast, forces that devolve responsibility to partners to deal with ASB are impacting negatively on their satisfaction ratings because the public see ASB as a police issue. It is clear however, that the role of partnership arrangements in addressing ASB and the cost-benefits of doing so warrants further and more detailed examination.

Given the tenor of these findings, and the emphasis placed on the importance of partnership working by most police forces during the inspection fieldwork, an attempt was made to determine what contribution was being made by Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to victim and citizen outcomes relating to ASB. So although the main focus of this study is upon the police, reflecting the police's own position, an attempt was made to establish the effectiveness of the partnership working arrangements that they participate in. Central government collects data on some CSP activities (such as the number of ASBOs and Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts issued), but such measures constitute only a minority of the interventions that CSPs conduct. More importantly though, data on the costs of CSP interventions and what outcomes they delivered from victims and communities could not be identified.

Consequently, in an effort to ascertain what CSPs are doing and what they are (and are not) delivering, a qualitative content analysis of the minutes from one CSP in each police force area was attempted. The intention of this analysis had been to track activity and progress in each CSP for a 12 month period in 2009. This task proved much harder than anticipated for a number of reasons, and as such is only able to provide indicative findings that require further testing and validation in the future. Nevertheless, some of the themes emerging from the analysis are sufficiently important that they warrant being briefly discussed:

- Variability – there appears to be significant variation in the organisation and standards of service being delivered by individual CSPs. Some are operating well, but it appears there are a sizeable proportion whose performance, when judged on the basis of public-facing outcomes, is more marginal.
- Cluttered – there is evidence that some CSPs have become highly bureaucratized, operating a plethora of working groups and multiple lines of accountability. This tends to support the interpretation of the results of the regression analysis provided above that in some cases there is too much

attention upon agencies working together, rather than working for the public.

- Challenge – the delicate politics of sustaining different agencies working together seems to inhibit a sufficient level of challenge about performance to be voiced. However, it was noted on repeated occasions in the minutes that invocations for 'partners to work more closely together' were evident, suggesting some ground-level recognition of tensions and problems.
- More strategy than delivery – in many partnerships there is evidence of what can only be described as a 'strategy tsunami', with a vast number of new and revised positions being proposed and adopted over series of meetings. This seems to be at the expense of considered and consistent, long-term, planned and monitored delivery.
- Timing – looking across the minutes it was striking that many interventions took a significant period of time to be actually delivered.
- Multiple interventions – a number of partnerships seemed to operate an 'intervention escalator' model, wherein they would pursue a similar process in respect of all individuals who were brought to their attention. That is, they would start with a fairly low level intervention, and across a series of meetings they would pursue progressively more intensive ones as the previous attempt failed to 'grip' the problem. Whilst there are valid reasons for adopting such an approach, it is worth reflecting that all the time these attempts are failing there are probably more victimisations occurring. An alternative would be to adopt a more robust risk-based approach where an assessment is made of what each case requires and intervening early and assertively where necessary, rather than hoping that a milder treatment might work.
- The Missing Victims – very little account seemed to be evident in the minutes of a victim perspective. The preponderance of information and work at the meetings focused upon governance issues, strategies, and interpreting prevalence data. It was striking that very little consideration was given to what could be done for victims.
- Value for money – there is very little evidence of robust cost-benefit analyses being used to determine which kinds of intervention should be implemented to address particular problems. Some CSPs do require 'business cases' to be prepared, but that is not the same as determining whether alternative strategic orientations could deliver better outcomes more cheaply.

This latter point is particularly significant as it is similar to a finding reported by the Audit Commission in 2006.[8] In this report a number of areas for improvement in partnership working between police, councils and other local services were identified. The approach adopted by the Commission was problematic in that it focused upon 'inputs' to the system with little consideration of public-facing outcomes. However, they did note a specific need to "…evaluate neighbourhood interventions regularly, assessing cost-effectiveness and value for money…". Based upon the analysis of CSP minutes for the year 2009, this does not appear to have happened.

It has become an orthodoxy amongst senior police to articulate strong support for the concept of partnership working and to assume a reliance upon such mechanisms to address ASB. Likewise, ASB victims strongly support the principle of police, councils and local agencies working together to construct solutions to local problems. However, whilst the concept is sound, it is not clear that the realities of what is being delivered through such arrangements has been robustly tested. Although we have not been able to establish a definitive figure, it is clear from examining the minutes from across the country that considerable sums of public money are being spent on, and channelled through, CSPs. We would estimate this to be in the region of tens of millions of pounds per annum on the basis of the documentary analysis conducted. Albeit the evidence compiled by this study is tentative, it does challenge a number of assumptions that have grown up around how partnership arrangements operate. On the basis of this evidence we would suggest there is a strong case for further investigation into the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of CSPs.

In addition to those dimensions of police system that have a marked effect upon victim outcomes, the analytic procedures also identified several aspects of police system quality that made no detectable difference to public perceptions and experiences. Most significantly, it was found that the provision of marketing information about crime and ASB levels to the public made no difference to ASB victim outcomes. This finding is relevant in light of recent research by the Metropolitan Police Service that has found that police marketing information can improve levels of public confidence in the police.[9] It would seem that whilst police marketing can enhance the views of the general public, it may not be effective in changing the attitudes of ASB victims.

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[8] Audit Commission (2006) Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour: Making Places Safer Through Improved Local Working.
[9] Hohl, K., B. Bradford & E. Stanko (2010) 'Influencing trust and confidence in the London Metropolitan Police', British Journal of Criminology, 50: 491-513.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

Those police forces achieving better outcomes in terms of victims of ASB and the public tended to:

- Brief all police staff (including NPTs, response officers and CID) thoroughly about ASB issues, and specific local problems;
- Use National Intelligence Model processes to manage and co-ordinate their responses to ASB;
- Ensure that Neighbourhood Policing teams are equipped and resourced to engage in tactical and strategic problem-solving of ASB issues.

Forces tended to do worse in terms of outcomes if:

- A strong graded response policy was being used to manage demand and to risk assess which calls for service are attended;
- Their partnership working becomes too 'inward' facing, rather than concentrating upon delivering outcomes for victims and citizens.

Overall, the evidence leads us to conclude that police presence and taking action to stop ASB problems in the shortest possible time-frame is pivotal in improving ASB victim and public outcomes.

RECONFIGURING RESPONSES TO ASB

The final section of this report seeks to build upon the findings of the preceding discussion to examine what can be done to improve responses to ASB in order to reduce the social harm it causes. Of course, the particular challenge associated with this task is that any improvement programme must account for the fact that we are situated in a moment of significant disinvestment from public services. It is clear that:

- There are going to be significant reductions in spending on police and community safety;
- Deep and wide-ranging reforms are expected in terms of how policing is organised and delivered.

Set against this backdrop, the idea of undertaking to improve the delivery of services to manage ASB may seem counter-intuitive. Indeed, given the financial pressures they are under, many senior officers may be tempted to withdraw from the 'ASB space' in order to concentrate their assets on volume and major crime. However, a careful reading of the research evidence collated in this report suggests that potentially more can be done in respect of ASB than might be initially apparent. Equally, given the increased social stress that communities are coming under in the aftermath of the recession, it is important that policing acknowledges the role it has in supporting and shaping the social infrastructure and well-being of communities.

Accordingly, in order to align an improved response to ASB with the pressures evident in the operating environment, it is recommended that the policing of ASB is reconfigured according to the following cross-cutting themes that can be identified in the preceding analysis:

- Start with the impact of problems, rather than how they are classified and counted;
- Challenge assumptions and act on the evidence;
- Understand that effective policing of ASB is potentially an agent for community mobilisation and supporting the work of the 'Big Society'.

Each of these themes will be addressed in turn.

A Focus Upon Impact and Harm
As was alluded to in the opening section, there has been lot of effort expended on the question of how ASB should be defined and categorised. The debates have

focused upon the extent to which different forms of disorderly and troubling conduct are similar to and distinct from each other, and from those classified as crimes in law. And whilst definitions and classifications are important, such issues can also serve as a distraction. Certainly the current arrangements for defining and classifying disorders do not appear to be 'fit for purpose', based as they are upon increasingly complex, technical and frequently artificial boundaries between acts. In their current form they require a lot of effort for police organisations to operationalise them, and as identified by this research, they are not doing a particularly good job of establishing the overall scale of the ASB problem.

Accordingly, the perspective adopted by this study starts from a different place. Rather than focusing upon whether an issue is a crime, ASB, or environmental disorder and thus something the police should or should not be dealing with, its base principle is whether an issue is causing harm to an individual, community or neighbourhood. If one returns to the founding statement for the Metropolitan Police issued by Rowan and Mayne, through to the analysis of Egon Bittner, such an approach is coherent with the precepts of the police function in society. As the evidence presented above clearly shows, the public do not distinguish between crime and ASB, so why should the police? People attend to a range of problems because they are impacting upon, or threaten, their individual or collective sense of security and well-being.

The predictable reaction to such an approach that will come from some quarters is that it will simply increase demand and therefore cannot be pursued. There are a number of reasons for questioning whether this is a valid objection:

1) First, it is well documented that crime and disorder has actually decreased significantly over the past two decades, and so there should be some capacity to engage with ASB issues.
2) Research has demonstrated that untreated ASB acts like a magnet for other problems. Therefore, dealing effectively and quickly with incidents when they present may act to suppress other problems. [10]
3) Managing ASB can create a space in which communities can mobilise and improve their capacity to resolve problems through informal social control and their own collective efficacy, rather than being dependent upon the police.

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[10] Keizer, K, Lindenberg, S. and Steg, L. (2008) 'The Spreading of Disorder', Science, 322/5908: 1681-85.

4) Finally, and as was demonstrated by calculating the 'social harm footprints' of different ASB problems, it is possible to start to tease out the different kinds of impacts that particular problems have upon the public.

This last point is especially significant as it suggests a forward strategy that can respond to public needs around ASB, without necessarily becoming overwhelmed by the volume of demand. Attending to the impacts of incidents and the harm that they do is a defining quality of the Signal Crimes Perspective (SCP). [11] The SCP contends that there are certain crimes and disorders that are more impactive than others because of their capacity to induce and trigger negative social reactions. Empirical research conducted in working out these ideas identified three main groups of negative reactions: cognitive effects where there is a change in how a person 'thinks' about their safety; 'affective', where the change is emotional and concerns how people 'feel'; and 'behavioural' where routines and actions are altered in light of either perceptions or experiences. By attending to the quality of social reactions elicited by different problems, it is proposed that one can distinguish between the 'signal events' that influence and shape individual and collective security, and those problems that are little more than the background 'noise' to everyday life.

The SCP was previously applied and tested in a policing context as part of the National Reassurance Policing Programme, the quasi-experimental test-bed and forerunner of Neighbourhood Policing (NP).[12] However, in the shift to NP it lost prominence and the importance it placed upon gauging and measuring neighbourhood impacts and reactions, ceded ground to the more straightforward notion of letting communities set 'priorities'. In the process though, an important quality was lost. Potentially, application of the SCP provides a way of establishing which problems, whether they be criminal or ASB, are harming individuals, neighbourhoods and communities at a local level. Such an understanding would thus afford the opportunity for establishing a local strategy that is responsive to local need.

The work conducted in this study extends the potential for developing a 'smarter' and 'sharper' policing response that is better able to meet local needs. Several factors have been identified that amplify the vulnerability to ASB and the risk of harm being caused. These are:

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[11] Innes, M. (2004) "Signal crimes and signal disorders: notes on deviance as communicative action", British Journal of Sociology. 55/3: 335-55.

[12] See Tuffin, R., Morris, J. and Poole, A. (2006) An Evaluation of the Impact of the National Reassurance Policing Programme. London: Home Office.

- Repeat victimisation – serial exposure to ASB is the most important factor in shaping the overall levels of harm caused;
- Personally targeted – where people experience problems that seem purposively directed towards them, then the effects are likely to be more intense. It is important to remember though that what appear to the police as individual incidents may be interpreted very differently by members of the public, who may perceive a greater connectivity between them. For example, a mix of chronic and more acute conditions may be a particularly potent mix in terms of the harm it induces;
- Personal vulnerability – the impact of ASB was found to be considerably greater across a range of outcomes where the person had a long-term health condition or disability;
- Contextual effects – the harder-pressed, urban neighbourhoods are more likely to experience ASB and are least likely to possess the social capital and capacity to counter it.

'Boots on the Ground' and Getting a Quick 'Grip' Works Sometimes

The research evidence generated by this study suggests that there is a strong case that police systems for managing ASB may have been over-engineered. As Bittner so incisively put it forty years ago, people call the police because something is happening that they want stopped. The evidence that we have compiled suggests that if police are positioned to respond to ASB and act to disrupt it quickly, then they can do much to reduce the harm to victims. In some ways this is an argument for going 'back to basics' and appreciating that whilst back-office systems and management procedures are important, what counts for victims and the public at large are getting police 'boots on the ground' at the time they are needed to provide an emergency response to the problem. Doing this as a matter of routine may prove to be challenging for many police forces in the current financial climate. For whilst using the SCP and vulnerability indicators affords a more precise way of targeting assets to need, going down this route may also require what amounts to a paradigm shift in police organisational structures and philosophy.

Similar arguments pertain to the role of Community Safety Partnerships in managing ASB. Multi-agency partnership working has become established as an orthodoxy over the past two decades. In relation to ASB, considerable weight is attributed to the work of CSPs by many police staff. However, in adopting a slightly more sceptical stance this research has raised some important questions about what these arrangements are delivering for the public in practice. This is not to say that the

concept of partnership working is misplaced or that all CSPs are the same, but it is time that some of the assumptions that appear to have grown up around partnerships are challenged and 'reality tested'.

One issue that brings these concerns together in sharp relief is the reliance upon the doctrine of 'problem-oriented partnerships' (POP).[13] In theory, POP is supposed to provide a structured framework via which agencies can work to manufacture solutions to the underlying causes of clusters or series of crime and disorder incidents.[14] From the research that has been conducted it is not clear whether the POP process is being effectively applied in all areas, or whether it merely provides a cover story for the less effective operations. There is certainly some data suggesting that rather than starting with analysis of the problem and working back from that to bring together resources to solve it, some partnerships operate a more generically formulated set of interventions that progress through a fairly established sequence until hopefully something acquires traction. Relatedly, the reliance on POP may be steering partners to depend more than they should upon longer term problem-solving interventions, at the expense of faster-time responses. The justification for invoking POP is that the underlying causes of a problem series of cluster can be addressed. However, the powerful counter-challenge to this is that each incident that comprises an incident cluster or series to be targeted through problem-solving methods is one more victimisation. And given that the analysis we have conducted suggests working through the POP process frequently takes partnerships a considerable amount of time, this is an important consideration.

This is not to dismiss the role of partnership working or the POP methodology. In respect of some issues and locations such an approach is entirely appropriate. There is though a case for saying that the current approach needs rebalancing, more towards building the capacity to take swift and decisive action to stop a problematic situation continuing and possibly escalating. In part, this could be achieved by ensuring that the considerable resources and assets available within CSPs are available for working in these kinds of ways.

The regression analysis reported in the previous section suggested a particular issue with the organisation of some multi-agency partnerships. To borrow some academic

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[13] For more information on this approach see Bullock, K. Erol, R. and Tilley, N. (2006) Problem-oriented Policing and Partnership: Implementation of an Evidence Based Approach to Crime Reduction. Cullompton: Willan.

[14] The key method of POP is based a process structure of Scan – Analyse – Respond – Assess.

jargon, the problem is that they are engaging in 'horizontal' rather than 'vertical' co-production. Co-production is a term used to suggest that agencies should work with others to manufacture solutions to particular problems.[15] In the case of ASB, the evidence suggests that in some areas there may be a tendency for police and partners to concentrate upon working together, rather than thinking about how they can reach down to establish connectivity within and across different communities. It is this latter form of 'vertical co-production' that seems to be important in mobilising communities to tackle ASB problems.

Leveraging the 'Big Society'

This leads on to the third and final theme for reforming and reconfiguring the current approach to managing ASB – the role of police action in mobilising communities and leveraging 'big society' mechanisms. Stated simply, the argument is that 'the big society' cannot do the 'heavy-lifting' in tackling chronic ASB problems. Rather, effective management of ASB by the police and their partners is an agent for community mobilisation. The data mapping the harm caused by ASB clearly demonstrates how ASB corrodes community cohesion and trust. Therefore, particularly in areas with a higher intensity of ASB problems, police have an important role in 'gripping' the problems in order to create a 'space' where community mobilisation can be 'seeded and grown'. Untreated ASB undermines precisely those qualities such as social trust, routine interactions with co-present strangers and confidence in public institutions that are necessary conditions for community directed social action. It also decays public trust and confidence in the police. A certain degree of neighbourhood security appears to be a necessary condition for establishing citizen-based peer-to-peer cooperation and collaboration. To put it another way, collective efficacy and social capital do not compensate for poor quality policing. Rather they frequently depend upon and are leveraged by police activity.

Halpern (2010) identifies three core components to the big society concept: community empowerment; social action; and public sector reform.[16] Broadly speaking, it seems to favour two key modes of intervention. The 'nudgers' focus upon the architecture of choice, and how by framing the decisions people make in selecting between courses of action, people can be subtly influenced to pursue

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[15] See: Halpern, D. (2010) The Hidden Wealth of Nations. Cambridge: Polity.; Rogers, B. (2010) The Woolwich Model: Can Citizens Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour. London: Royal Society of the Arts.
[16] Halpern, D. (2010) 'Give the big society a break'. Prospect (September) p.22-3.

socially desirable ends.[17] In contrast, a second group of big society theorists place far more emphasis upon the value of understanding and harnessing the latent power of peoples' social networks.[18] These 'networkers' focus upon the ties between people and how they afford opportunities for the transmission of either pro-social or anti-social behaviours, ideas or values.

How then can policing be used to facilitate these forms of increased citizen action and participation? There are important precedents for thinking about such matters to be found in the Home Office funded National Reassurance Policing Programme (NRPP) that ran between 2003-05 in 16 trial sites in England. This tested a policing model founded upon:

- Visible, accessible, familiar and effective officers;
- Community-intelligence led targeting of the signal crimes doing most harm to communities;
- Co-producing solutions with partners and the public.[19]

This programme provided the template for, and was translated into, Neighbourhood Policing. Interestingly though, in the process of translation, as occurred with the SCP, the last element (co-producing solutions with the public) was neglected and omitted from the standard operating processes devised for policing neighbourhoods. Rather than co-producing solutions, the public's role in Neighbourhood Policing was reduced to being consulted. In effect, this ensured the police retained control.

The research evidence collected during the Reassurance Policing trial on working with the public was interesting though. For it suggested that public co-production was the element that police found most difficult and challenging, and elicited particular organisational reticence. However, several of the trial sites did try to progress direct citizen participation in designing and delivering a form of policing more responsive to their security needs. Over the relatively short trial period, when compared with their matched control sites:

- In four sites residents reported increased trust in their neighbours (significant in one). This may be a potentially important precursor to increased working together.

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[17] Thaler, R. and Sunstein, C. (2008) Nudge: Improving Decisions About Health, Wealth and Happiness. New Haven: Yale University Press.

[18] Christakis, N. and Fowler, J. (2009) Connected: The Amazing Power of Social Networks and How They Shape Our Lives. London: Harper Press.

[19] Innes, M. and C. Roberts (2008) 'Reassurance policing, community intelligence and the co-production of neighbourhood order' in T. Williamson (ed.) The Handbook of Knowledge Based Policing. Chichester: Wiley

- There was a fourteen point increase in community cohesion in the Lancashire site;
- Four sites reported an increase in the number of residents believing that local people would intervene to tell youngsters off if they were causing a nuisance.

Some sense of how this move to working more co-productively with the community was accomplished by police can be gained from looking at a case study of Ingol in Preston, Lancashire, one of the NRPP sites.[20] As the police presence and activity was able to build the confidence of the community, who had been assailed for many years by high levels of crime and ASB, and other problems associated with multiple deprivation, certain individuals were sufficiently encouraged to take on social entrepreneurship roles, setting up four residents' associations, organising estate clean-up days and citizen patrols. However, the emergence of these forms of local social action had to be carefully negotiated and developed. Initially, the police programme was met with suspicion when it was announced as the community felt they had been let down by the authorities many times before.

A critical factor in the police's role in supporting community activity was their work to improve the community intelligence flow about what ASB and crime was occurring on the estate, and then taking quick and visible action to deal with this. The implementation of this strategy involved some innovative thinking in its early stages about how to interact with members of the public undertaken by one female PCSO. This was necessary because there was a strong culture on the estate of not being seen to engage with police, for doing so could result in a person being labelled 'a grass' with the potential for repercussions. Newly assigned to the estate, the female PCSO recognised that there was a need to engage with people, but her early attempts were largely rebuffed. Importantly though she persisted. Every day she walked through the estate following the same route, saying "hello" or passing a few words to the people she met. As people became accustomed to her presence, her interactions with key individuals moved beyond pleasantries. The next move was crucial though. She extended her route out of the estate into an adjacent park. She had worked out that all the time the interactions were occurring on the estate people felt intimidated and that they might be being watched. In the park, on the pretext of walking their dog, people felt safer and when they encountered the PCSO they began to slip her notes of paper containing intelligence on various criminal activities that were taking place. Accessing the local knowledge held by those people was a key factor in improving the delivery of policing.

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[20] These data were collected by Innes through fieldwork and interviews conducted as part of the NRPP in 2004.

As conditions in the estate started to improve so citizens felt able to do more to improve their quality of life. For example, some men got together and organized a football team for the young people in the area. A rota system was devised whereby some residents would help their elderly neighbours to go to Church on a Sunday, who felt intimidated. The police activity performed was by no means 'pink and fluffy' it was about collecting intelligence and conducting enforcement actions to 'take the ground' so that other social actors would feel able to mobilise. It is important to acknowledge what can and cannot be achieved by this approach. Life on Queen's Park was not totally transformed, the structural imperatives were too strong for that, but it did become better than it was before. Perhaps the key insight of this case study is to show how it is important to think about *the process* by which citizens can be empowered and facilitated to mobilize and become more active.

The NRPP evidence on the importance of 'vertical co-production' in supporting 'horizontal co-production' between citizens is important inasmuch as it suggests that expecting big society mechanisms to spontaneously energise to solve problems is unrealistic. As the evidence from the NRPP shows, it is not being suggested that triggering community mobilisation is the responsibility of the police. Rather, the police role is in 'taking the ground' in troubled environments in order that communities can mobilise. The actual work of getting communities working together can be performed by other local agencies and partners. However, the police do have a responsibility for ensuring that any such movements can acquire traction. In sum, effective policing of ASB can act as an accelerating agent that can leverage the growth of the big society, but only rarely does a big society compensate for poor policing.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Examining the harm induced by ASB, the earlier analysis identified that one of its most profound and potent effects is the social isolation it creates. Repeated exposure to ASB is corrosive of community cohesion, levels of trust between co-residents, and confidence in the police.
- Therefore, achieving the government's stated desire to foster a 'big society' in those areas that could gain most may well depend upon the ability of the police and their partners to 'grip' ASB.
- The police role is in creating a sufficient level of security that community activism and participation can take hold. This requires the development of

co-productive working arrangements between the police and the public.
Policing functions as a catalyst for community mobilisation.

APPENDIX: FULL RESULTS OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS

As reported in the main section of the document, fifteen police system quality variables and nine outcome variables were identified through analysis of the data. These were then subject to a regression analysis to identify what aspects of the police response were most significant in shaping victim experiences and perceptions. The full results are provided below. The first table details the system variables and the second the outcome variables.

System Indicator	Code
NPT, Response and CID staff are regularly briefed about ASB issues, and in detail about specific local ASB issues.	**Briefed**
There is an attendance or graded response policy which, as a minimum, covers victim risk, response and deployment criteria. This includes the provision of a clear explanation to the caller if there is no attendance.	**GradedResp**
Relevant history is systematically and consistently passed to attending staff.	**History**
The Chief Officer lead drives activity. Egchairs strategic group or chairs a performance management meeting where ASB is directly monitored and managed.	**COActivity**
The force has definitions of ASB, repeat and vulnerable complainants.	**Definitions**
The force manages its ASB performance through NIM with focus on repeat complainants/locations, and vulnerable complainants.	**ManNIM**
The force tracks action against their performance through meetings at least monthly.	**ActionForce**
BCUs track action against their performance through meetings at least monthly.	**ActionBCU**
At the point of report, repeat complainants are identified (including crimes, not just limited to repeat ASB). For instance, automatic IT (by telephone number, address, and/or name*)* or via a manual trawl of IT systems, or via a probe of the complainant by the call handler.	**RepeatPOR**
At the point of report, vulnerable complainants are identified. For instance, via automatic IT where the complainant has been previously deemed vulnerable (by telephone number, address, and/or name*)* or via a manual trawl of IT systems, or via a probe of the complainant by the call handler.	**VulnerablePOR**
NPTs have procedures for implementing the available tactical options and problem solving options to deal with ASB, and track the progress of these actions.	**NPTsProbSolve**
Police engage effectively with appropriate partner agencies to tackle short, mid, and long term ASB, sharing targets and performance management.	**PartnerColl**
Information sharing with appropriate partner agencies around ASB is effective, and analysis of incidents is comprehensive.	**PartnerShare**
Work has been carried out at force, BCU and local level to understand what data partners have to help tackle ASB.	**PartnerIntell**
All ASB incidents reported (including verbally to staff, by letter, or email) are recorded on the force system.	**ASBReport**

Public Facing Outcomes	Code
It is the responsibility of the police, local council and other public services working in partnership to deal with anti-social behaviour in your local area, how good a job do you think they're doing?	**Conf**
Approximately, how many times over the past year have you called the police to report anti-social behaviour?	**Freq of Report**
Overall, to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with how the police handled your call?	**Handle**
Thinking of your contact with the police, overall, to what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way you were treated by police officers and/	**Treatment**
To what extent were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way in which you were provided with information from the police following your call?	**Information**
To what extent do you feel your call made a difference to the problem you were calling about?	**Difference**
How much of a problem do you think anti-social behaviour is in your area, or do you not think it is a problem at all? Would you say it is a ...?	**ASBProblem**
How much do feel you 'belong' to the community and that where you live is a 'tight knit' community?	**SC**
How much does ASB impact on your quality of life?	**QoL**

Table 10 shows the results of the logistic regression analysis. The outcomes have been grouped together under three main headings: reporting; case management and processing; and outcomes. The case management variables are analysed collectively because they respond uniformly to system changes. The impacts of the system indicators on these outcome measures are colour coded according to the strength and direction of the impact. Those shaded green suggest a positive impact and those red a negative one.

Top line Indicators	Freq. of Report	Handling	Treatment	Information	Difference	ASB Problem	Confidence	SC	QoL
Grouped Indicators	**Reporting**	**Case Management**				**Outcomes**			
Briefed	Less	Positive				Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive
GradedResp	Less	Negative				Negative	Negative		Negative
History	More						Negative		Negative
COActivity		Positive					Negative		
Definitions		Positive						Negative	
ManNIM		Positive				Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive
ActionForce		Positive					Positive		
ActionBCU		Positive							
RepeatPOR									
VulnerablePOR									Positive
NPTsProbSolve	More	Positive					Positive	Negative	
PartnerColl		Negative					Positive	Negative	
PartnerShare		Negative						Positive	Negative
PartnerIntell									Positive
ASBReport						Positive			Positive

Positive (strong green)	Strong positive factor
Positive (moderate green)	Moderate positive factor
Negative (strong red)	Strong negative factor
Negative (moderate red)	Moderate negative factor

TABLE 11: POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF POLICE SYSTEM QUALITY ON PUBLIC OUTCOMES FOR ASB

This Table captures some complex interactions between the quality of policing and the achievement of particular outcomes for victims of ASB. The key themes can be summarized as follows:

- The most influential factor in shaping a range of public outcomes is whether officers are regularly briefed in detail about ASB issues, ranging from NPT officers, through to response teams and CID;
- The presence of a 'response grading' system has a consistently strong negative impact from the public's point of view. This seems to be because it means that the majority of victims who contact the police do not receive the service they perceive their problem warrants. The exception to this is vulnerable victims who perceive graded response more positively. In effect, there is a bifurcation of outcomes with the minority of vulnerable victims responding positively to the consequences of response grading, whilst the majority of victims do not. Particularly for this latter group, exposure to a graded response seems likely to discourage future reporting of similar problems.
- Using NIM processes to process, track and manage cases has a positive impact across the outcomes measured, and also victim satisfaction with their handling and treatment.
- The active involvement of NPTs in problem-solving issues has a broadly positive impact. In particular, it was one of only two system variables that evidenced a capacity to increase reporting.
- Importantly, two dimensions of partnership working had strongly negative impacts upon all four case management indicators. A plausible interpretation in respect of this is that some partnership arrangements have a tendency to become internally oriented rather than public facing. As such, they tend to become insufficiently concerned with the victim experience, at the expense of procedural matters.