**Anti-Social Behaviour in the Greater Shantallow Area of Derry: Reasons & Causes -
Developing effective responses for addressing the issue of Anti-Social Behaviour and
Young People**

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<u>Summary</u>

As a youth worker operating in an area 'plagued' by Anti-Social Behaviour I have grown more and more concerned about how communities here view young people. I have grown concerned at how at a macro level society views young people particularly in light of recent policy developments within Government and the approach to young people embodied by the Media. I wanted to therefore examine the issue of Young People and Anti-Social Behaviour by asking young people their views on what Anti-Social Behaviour is, what its causes are and from this generate ideas for addressing it that can be implemented at local level.

This study begins in Section 1 within an outline of the background to the research, the context in which it was operating, the purpose for which it was established and an overview of my concerns as a professional/practitioner. In Section 2, I attempt to contextualise the study by offering a historical overview including political and policy approaches from the early 1980s and consider the impact of both 'The Troubles' and globalisation on Anti-Social Behaviour. Section 3 concentrates on Anti-Social Behaviour and its relationship with Young People and considers both current governmental thinking and influence of the Media within the context of a society heavily focused on employing a punitive approach.

Section 4 addresses why Young People become involved in Anti-Social Behaviour and considers what it is to grow up in Modern Society and the impact this has and its connection with Anti-Social Behaviour. Finally, Section 5 details research conducted with young people from St. Brigid's College in Derry providing an overview of discussion, findings and conclusion. This study found that behaviour normally considered as harassment or intimidation by adults is not an opinion shared by young people and therefore there is a pressing need for both young people and adults to meet and discuss what constitutes Anti-Social Behaviour, understand its impact and together work to address the issue.

<u>Abbreviations</u>

ADHD   Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ASBO   Anti-Social Behaviour Order

DVD   Digital Video Disc

GSAP   Greater Shantallow Area Partnership

ICR   Institute for Conflict Research

JEDI   Joined in Equity Diversity and Interdependence

NIACRO   Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders

PAT   Policy Action Team

PC   Personal Computer

PSE   Personal and Social Education

TSN   Targeting Social Need

UN   United Nations

UK   United Kingdom

WELB   Western Education & Library Board

WHSSB   Western Health & Social Services Board

Access to Contents

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Background to study

In 2003, Off the Streets (of which I am Project Director) participated in the Social Economy Agency's Economy Advisory Programme. The programme helped groups explore the concept of Social Economy in an effort to develop a greater business capacity that in turn would lead to groups being better able to sustain themselves. We wanted to develop our business acumen in an effort to more effectively control how we generate funding.

Involvement in this programme necessitated research primarily to determine, in market terms, our target group and competitors. However, we looked upon the research as an opportunity to do more than that! We felt that if we were going to 'go to the bother' of compiling research why not make it more comprehensive and certainly much more in-depth.

Within the context of our strategic review, we looked upon the research as a means to an end, i.e., effectively helping determine how we should deliver future services and also test whether or not our current provision was 'hitting the target.' We wanted to determine how future provision might look and it was necessary to ask some pertinent questions particularly with reference to our target group, i.e., young people. In a sense we wanted to establish a baseline in regard to a number of issues and so sought their opinion on a number of related matters. In partnership with the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR) we initiated a survey with 417 pupils from St Brigid's College in the Carnhill area of Greater Shantallow. The survey established a number of key findings. Among these, our report concluded that many young people, who are often accused of harassing adults, do not really feel safe in the area themselves particularly at night-time or when out without any friends (Off the Streets 2004).

In order to build upon this and explore these findings in further detail we quickly set about a second study considering a number of issues pertaining to community safety. Anti-Social behaviour takes many forms (Audits and Strategies Toolkit, 2004) but is often viewed by adults as something perpetrated by young people against adults and the broader community.

We wanted to determine young people's understanding of anti-social behaviour and the various types of behaviour that this constitutes as anti-social and what they viewed as relevant and 'appropriate punishments' as well as attempt to gauge their understanding of ASBOs (Anti-Social Behaviour Orders).

Our view was that this would help us better understand young people's attitude towards Anti-Social Behaviour and therefore enable us to approach it with an informed opinion. It would also provide an outlet for respondents to express their opinion on the subject. However, an examination of young people's understanding of what constitutes anti-social behaviour and appropriate punishments would not allow us to fully examine the subject. A third study was necessary, one that examined causes. On completion we could confidently spell out a localised approach to anti-social behaviour having identified causes and responses based on the views of young people living in the Greater Shantallow Area.

My dissertation is the culmination of this work and incorporates that third study with young people drawn from St. Brigid's College with the purpose of uncovering what Anti-Social Behaviour is , what are the causes of Anti-Social Behaviour, what can be learnt from this and how can this learning be used to respond effectively and appropriately to Anti-Social Behaviour in the Greater Shantallow Area.

Context for study

I have chosen to examine Anti-Social Behaviour for a number of reasons. On a professional level it has everything to do with my job at this moment in time whilst at a personal level I have a strong interest in approaches to the issue of anti-social behaviour, particularly that of government policy and mass media.

I am interested in the impact that the official approach has on young people and I'm concerned with regard to the perception of young people that is held by the 'adult world' within the context of the current climate surrounding anti-social behaviour. The area that I work in i.e., Greater Shantallow Area is also an area that suffers quite a bit from anti-social behaviour and this is having a major impact on the lives of residents.

Concerns

To understand my professional concerns one must begin to understand the impact that anti-social behaviour has had on the area I work in. However, this is not possible without first understanding the dynamics of the area (see appendix 1). Off the Streets is located in Galliagh (Shantallow West) which is currently the area worst affected in terms of reported incidents. Incidents tend to be reported in two ways (i) complaints to the usual authorities such as the Emergency Services including the Police, Housing Executive, Political Parties, and local community groups such as the Outer North Community Safety Task Force and (ii) the Media.

Some residents choose to go direct to the media first and this is most probably an indication of the frustrations of residents who often feel powerless to do anything about what they view as unacceptable behaviour. This frustration is exercised through the media in an effort to secure some form of redress but ultimately (whilst highlighting the issue) only serves to

reinforce the tarnished reputation that Galliagh has and more so that which it brings to the Greater Shantallow Area.

The impact of using the Media whilst giving vent to the anger and frustrations of many also serves to reinforce the negative perceptions that exist about young people. Whilst I'm sympathetic to the many residents who are plagued by anti-social elements (not least of all because I too have been a victim of both crime and Anti-Social Behaviour) the use of media serves only to give the impression that the majority of young people are involved. This playing out of fears and frustrations in the media also has the impact of the further clambering for what I call 'quick fix, magic wand' solutions, i.e., people want Anti-Social Behaviour to simply disappear.

As a committed youth worker I believe fundamentally that the health and welfare of children and young people is paramount, and that the current approach of government and the media to placate the fears and concerns of the public without any great debate on how to respond effectively to the causes and impact of Anti-Social Behaviour is a direct challenge to me as a practitioner. I often have to argue the merits of our work whilst advocating on behalf of young people be it through radio, television, newspaper or as the case may be 'on the street.'

This challenge goes straight to the very core of my essence as a youth worker. I have a fundamental belief that human beings are not born bad and therefore society should consider why a young person acts in a particular way first rather than spend time looking to allocate blame and punish them as a result.

This belief is further enshrined by my experience as a young man 'growing up' into the profession of youth work. I was taught to believe that the first rules of youth work are tolerance and acceptance and values that underpin my practice should be based on fairness, justice and equality whilst my principles are governed by many of the articles set out in the

UN Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. I have subscribed to these and incorporated them into my work and thus serve, as the basis for my practice and any deviation from this brings into question my very existence as a Youth Worker.

With regard to Anti-Social Behaviour I have become particularly concerned about the approach that has increasingly come to signify and more evidently underpin governmental thinking with regard to 'dealing' with anti-social behaviour; namely that which is articulated through the 'Respect Agenda' (Lloyd 2006). Whilst not surprised at the 'Moral Panics' that have come to be directed through the media there seems to be a growing congruence in the thinking between both government and media very much articulating a one-way debate on the subject of anti-social behaviour with very little space given to contesting voices (Raynor, Vanstone 2002).

Therefore the impact of the current clamour to ignore reasons why there is Anti-Social Behaviour in favour of simply punishing those who engage in it seems to me to defy logic and common sense. If we are to respond effectively to Anti Social Behaviour surely we must try and understand why it happens. I believe in the dealing with the 'what is' not the 'what should be', i.e., let's not concentrate on how things should be but rather how they are. If we concentrate on what should be then we would inevitably be doomed to failure as we fail to address the reasons for what's happening right now. This in a sense was one of the reasons why my own organisation was set up.

Off the Streets (based in Galliagh) has been in existence since 1996. It was set up in response to the fears and concerns about the behaviour of young people on the streets of Greater Shantallow Area. It was an attempt by the community to take control of an issue that seemed to be growing unchecked. Ten years on the issue of young people's behaviour is no longer regarded as a series of sporadic incidences of misbehaviour by young people but has been

firmly framed within the context of anti-social behaviour (without any deeper examination of the issue) in that almost any behaviour deemed as 'threatening' or thought to be threatening, be it simply gathering together in a public place and/or noise pollution, is labelled as anti-social.

Determining an effective approach to addressing the issue of anti-social behaviour that meets the concerns of both young people and adults is a major challenge. This is particularly relevant in the Greater Shantallow Area as the feeling among many is one of a situation out of control (Katherine Spence, 2005).

Aside from Off the Streets being set up to address negative behaviour there is a growing recognition for some time that the most effective way of tackling this issue is to begin by addressing it on the streets with young people (Spence, Pugh and Turner, 2003). Only 1 in 5 young people (Off the Streets, 2004) use mainstream youth provision in the Greater Shantallow Area and that which is provided in this case by the WELB (Western Education and Library Board) is closed at key times when behaviour is at its worse (Hannson, 2005) and when young people have expressed greatest fear with regard to their own safety (Lentin 2002, Roche 2005). Therefore it is necessary to make recommendations that can realistically begin to address Anti-Social Behaviour within the Greater Shantallow Area.

Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to examine the issue of Anti-Social Behaviour with reference to both local and national perspectives and in doing so consider implications for developing a more effective response to the difficulties it poses to communities living in the Greater Shantallow Area. This in particular is with regard to the role of young people in Anti-Social Behaviour. Little or no effort has been made (in the Greater Shantallow Area) either to engage young people's views on Anti-Social Behaviour or involve them in any process that attempts to resolve the issue. The link between young people and Anti-Social Behaviour

receives a high profile but, less so, consideration of the reasons why young people become involved.

This study will provide answers to this by providing an overview as to why young people become involved in an effort to increase understanding of factors that influence behaviour. The study will also provide clarity regarding what young people believe Anti-Social Behaviour to be and its causes. I have solicited the views of small groups of young people aged between 14 and 16 currently attending St. Brigid's College, the main secondary school in the area with a school going population of around 900 pupils. I have approached this age group because as research has shown (Off the Streets, 2004) they constitute the group most likely to be a victim or involved in Anti-Social Behaviour.

Their views combined with an examination of existing literature will provide the basis from where a series of recommendations can be proposed that will not only help inform the delivery of youth work practice at Off the Streets but can then be shared with practitioners in a range of organisations across the Greater Shantallow Area. Those organisations with responsibility for a variety of services (be as they may) from community, voluntary or statutory background can consider the recommendations in the delivery of services.

Context

Anti-Social Behaviour is an issue that seemingly plagues society. The popular perception goes like this. It is a thing that only young people do (Millie et al, 2005). It is something young people do deliberately and know what they're doing is wrong. It is something that they do only to adults. It is something that wouldn't have happened years ago. It is something that's threatening to undermine the moral fabric of our society. It is a crisis waiting to happen. It's an issue that if only sorted out would put everything right. It is an issue that is at the heart of government policy. It is an issue for which the government does nothing about. It is an issue that government doesn't really care about. It is an issue that Government does not know how to sort out. It is an issue that the government is not prepared to do the right thing and sort out those really responsible. It is something that is the result of 'do-gooders' and the 'softly, softly' brigade. It is something that a return to traditional values would sort out. It is something that a 'clip around the ear' would sort out….after all 'it didn't do me any harm.'

This of course would be true if you believed all the headlines and hype and were prepared to take newspapers (in particular) at face value. Society is right in believing that every individual should have the right to live life peacefully without fear of attack, injury or risk to life. If we are fortunate enough to be able to work and can earn a living that allows us get on with life we should have the right to enjoy it without risk. However, we live in a society where unfortunately not everyone shares this belief and this in a sense is the crux of the matter – arguably if everyone shared this belief then we would be free to enjoy life without risk.

But what is the real story with Anti-Social Behaviour? What is it? Why does it happen? How does it happen? What are its causes? What can we do about it? In order to answer any of these questions we must examine Anti-Social Behaviour in depth.

This study will do so by first of all looking at behaviour that constitutes as being Anti-Social and the various contexts that Anti-Social Behaviour exists within (including historical and political) before considering definitions of Anti-social Behaviour, approaches to dealing with it, and young people's involvement in it. The study will also look at how and why young people become involved in Anti-Social Behaviour (including reference to underlying causes), what it means to grow up in modern society, the impact of this, and then examine a range of responses. Finally, it proposes a localised approach for dealing with anti-social behaviour in the Greater Shantallow Area.

In attempting to examine the subject of Anti-Social Behaviour I encountered a number of difficulties. First of all the subject matter is set almost entirely within the context of the study of broader subjects such delinquency, adolescence, youth justice and/or criminal justice. It proved somewhat difficult to locate literature dedicated to the study of Anti-Social Behaviour in its own right.

Secondly, most available literature relies heavily on studies conducted outside of Northern Ireland, i.e., England and the United States. This makes it difficult to try and place this study within a localised context with the opportunity to contrast and compare findings denied. A third difficulty is that the subject of Anti-Social Behaviour in Northern Ireland has been and continues to be set within the context of 'The Troubles'.

Much of the negative behaviours exhibited here are the same as those in England yet the existence of and support for the use of paramilitary style shootings and beatings only serves to

underline the significance of the link between the political conflict and Anti-Social Behaviour here.

Only now, after more than a decade after the first ceasefire and when it was commonly accepted that *'a lid was kept on it'* (a reference to how some observed the pre ceasefire 'informal approach' to Anti-Social Behaviour*)* by the paramilitaries in their respective areas does Anti-Social Behaviour now take on a greater significance and in a sense 'comes into it's own'. For many a return to the use of shootings and beatings as a means of exercising control and 'sending out a message' would be welcome further illustrating the connection with the Troubles but this has been restricted due in the main to political developments. Whilst these difficulties might have posed a challenge in relation to ensuring a more contextualised approach it has detracted little overall in my efforts to complete the study.

Anti-Social Behaviour – a historical context

In order to put Anti-Social Behaviour in context, I need to first of all look at it within a policy context, secondly, within the context of the conflict in Northern Ireland and thirdly, within the context of a changing planet, i.e., globalisation.

My reason for choosing to begin in this way is simple – Northern Ireland is part of the UK and any government policy (whilst not always applicable to here) will have implications for people living here. For example, the introduction of ASBO Legislation (following the Crime & Disorder Act in 1998) eventually came into being here in 2005. And whilst Direct Rule continues in the absence of locally devolved government we will invariably be affected by government policy.

The introduction of ASBOs here was the subject of much contention (Hansson, 2005) as it was argued that what was being proposed for Northern Ireland was based on the model that already existed in England, but was introduced without taking cognisance of the political

context here (Sinn Fein, 2004). The very reason why many groups highlighted this among their objections to the introduction of ASBOs to Northern Ireland illustrates the need to examine the context of the conflict here. The political conflict in Northern Ireland has had a huge impact on society in Northern Ireland and its relevance to the subject matter cannot be underestimated.

The third and final reason for addressing Anti-Social Behaviour within the context of a changing planet is that globalisation is also having a major effect on government strategy in a wide range of matters including economics, politics and society in general. Britain's response to issues on a global scale has an effect on the population here and like the impact of political conflict this too cannot be underestimated.

Policy Context

In March 2000, the Policy Action Team on Anti-Social Behaviour (PAT 8) produced a report as part of the National Strategy on Neighbourhood Renewal. Charles Clarke (Secretary of State) wrote in his foreword

> Anti-Social Behaviour destroys lives and shatters communities. It is a widespread problem but its effects are often most damaging to communities that are already fragile.

The report went on to highlight a number of key points, i.e.., Anti-Social Behaviour is perpetrated by a small number of people, it mainly affects deprived neighbourhoods (Millie et al, 2005) and is more likely to be carried out by people affected by a number of problems including (among other things) drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, unemployment, low income and lack of skills.

It also highlighted the lack of a fixed definition; Anti-Social Behaviour consisted of a vast array of behaviour *from clearly criminal to that causing lifestyle clashes.* (PAT 8, P15).

There is also recognition that whilst young people are involved in Anti-Social Behaviour they are more likely to be a victim of crime.

Approaches to resolving Anti-Social Behaviour are very much at the heart of government policy and this was among many election pledges made by Labour before coming to power in 1997, i.e., *tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime.* However, such pledges can be traced much further back. It can be argued that Labour's approach is not only a direct response to a growing issue but a result of failures in the past to tackle what is a long established problem, and not as the media might suggest, a most recent phenomenon. When the Conservatives came to power in 1979 Britain was in the midst of an economic crisis and industrial unrest. Much of their pre-election campaign focused on law and order and in a time when the public needed reassurance the Conservatives provided with its shift away from a welfare-based response to social ills preferring instead to promote right-wing approaches to crime including *a punishment-based response to juvenile crime* (Brown, 1998). This helped set the tone for successive governments and succeeded in politicising crime with which the Labour government has now continued to promote with its 'Respect Agenda.'

Political Conflict

The legacy of the political conflict in Northern Ireland effects every facet of our society e.g., polarised communities, segregated education, acceptable and 'justifiable' levels of violence. Everything from where you live and the school you attend to your name, where you work, shop, eat, so on and so on is often determined by the legacy of conflict in Ireland and in particular the period from the late 1960s which has traumatised a whole generation, namely those who grew up in 'the troubles' and perhaps to a lesser extent but no less important those who grew up in post-ceasefire society.

It's no coincidence that post 1994 (ceasefires) *'the lid seem to come off'* and many communities 'controlled' by paramilitaries were seemingly and suddenly plagued by a major upsurge in anti-social behaviour. In the political context of Northern Ireland, questions as to how much 'the Troubles' seemingly 'kept a lid' on anti-social behaviour and how much it actually disguised have yet to be answered. However, here the interest is in considering the impact 'the Troubles' has had on communities and how this has inadvertently contributed to what is generally considered to be anti-social behaviour.

The impact of 'the Troubles' is well documented if still being considered in light of political developments in recent times. Ceasefires followed by the Good Friday Agreement and devolved government (and equally suspensions) have however provided a new dispensation where political progress has been made possible and space to consider the impact of such a prolonged period of violence studied. The impact of 'the Troubles' has been greatest on children (Smyth, Fay & Morrisery 1999). This no more so than the use of paramilitary style violence to exercise control.

Young people who engaged in anti-social behaviour were at the risk of being targeted by paramilitaries. Paramilitaries saw their own violence as political and a means to an end whilst they viewed anti-social behaviour as an attack on their own communities and therefore should not be tolerated. This of course has created the notion of acceptable levels of violence with the effect that many young people now often view resolution of conflict by no other means. Research by Off the Streets in 2004 highlighted how 50% of pupils thought that revenge was acceptable whilst 30% thought it ok to carry a weapon suggesting a worrying trend in approaches to dealing with conflict. In a period when paramilitary violence is no longer considered an option as a means of control and where the issue of policing remains unresolved, and whilst the political vacuum continues to abound the challenge of effectively dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour could not be stiffer.

'Changing Planet'

Events beyond our borders can no longer be viewed in isolation, or seen as something that merely happens to others. Why? The Global Economy is growing, information technology has brought us closer together, debt still cripples developing countries whilst the disparity between the rich and the poor grows all the time. Also, there is the inability or the lack of resolve among nations to tackle environmental issues, climate change has brought many natural disasters and in it's wake a trail of destruction, death and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Events of September 11 along with war, famine, starvation, poverty and population shifts, has stretched the resources and willingness of many countries.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and old 'Eastern Bloc' nations, the redrawing of landscapes and national boundaries, the emergence of independent states and removal of borders has brought growing tension between many ethnic groupings often ending in open conflict between once former neighbours. The growth in extreme forms of nationalism, the dependency of poorer nations on the larger more economically stable countries, the perceived impact of pre-accession countries along with the growing economies of the Baltic States has created fear and instability among many western European nations. The introduction of a single currency has for some swelled the notion of being subsumed by a super-state and the influx of foreign nationals between countries is just some of the issues that governments within and outside of the EU have attempted to resolve.

These events mean we are faced with many difficulties on a social, political, economic and environmental scale, all of which will have implications both at micro and macro, level. Many challenges are posed as we struggle to come to terms with what it means to live within this rapidly changing and developing continent.

What is the impact of this on young people? In an evolving Europe,

> Demographers have observed that, under pressure from economic factors (employability, unemployment, etc) and socio-cultural factors, young people are, on average, older when they reach the various stages of life: end of formal education, start of employment, starting a family, etc. A second point concerns non-linear paths through life. Today 'our various life-roles are becoming confused'….Paths through life are becoming less linear as societies no longer offer the same guarantees. Third, traditional collective models are losing ground as personal pathways are becoming increasingly individualised. 'The organisation of individuals' family, marriage and career plans is no longer standardised.'….Young people are now less committed than in the past to the traditional structures for political and social action….Most show a clear will to participate and to influence the choices made by society, but they wish to do so on a more individual and more one-off basis…It is up to the public authorities to bridge the gap between young people's eagerness to express their opinions and the methods and structures which society offers. Failure to do so might fuel the 'citizenship' deficit, or even encourage protest…(European White Paper 2001)

Whilst many of these changes seem too far off to contemplate their significance, to ignore the impact on Northern Ireland is to underestimate their direct or indirect effect at local level and ultimately the problems it creates among communities. For instance, our once thriving shirt industry has like manufacturing across the North all but disappeared as a result of cheaper competition particularly in areas such as Asia. Smyth (1998) puts it succinctly when he says

> The impact of changes in the global economy and corresponding policy on the local employment market over the last twenty years has consistently lowered young peoples expectations. Children and young people in areas worst affected by the troubles and deprivation are realistically pessimistic about the chances of obtaining paid employment, and about the quality or duration of that employment for those who do manage to obtain jobs…..The reduction of children and young people's expectations of life, together with real impoverishment of their life chances has produced a generation of children and young people some of whose ambitions and expectations run counter to the norms of the wider society.

Defining Anti-social Behaviour

Defining Anti-Social Behaviour has proven difficult for academics, practitioners and policy makers alike. What might be alarm or distress to one party might not necessarily be the same to another. What might be of nuisance to adults might not be an opinion shared by young people. Of course there are clear behaviours that are defined as unlawful but others are

problematic; for instance, young people playing football in a back street against the wishes of residents - does this actually constitute anti-social behaviour?

Likewise, young people using quads or other forms of motorised transport is clearly viewed as a nuisance by residents but for young people it may be another means of pursuing a hobby or having 'a bit of fun.' As suggested in the Audits and Strategies Toolkit (2004) 'the subjective nature of the concept makes it difficult to identify a single definition of Anti-Social Behaviour'.

Difficulties in definition are further highlighted in the 5th report of the Select Committee on Home Affairs (2005) when it stated that 'Anti-Social Behaviour means different things to different people' a point taken up in the same report by the Crime & Society Foundation when it commented

> …the breadth of the definitions is seen as hindering an effective policy response…in the view of the Foundation the combination of a definition based on subjective criteria and an attempt to encompass a wide range of behaviours under one term leads to inappropriate, expensive and sometimes draconian policy responses.

Whilst there are a number of definitions available that which has been most commonly accepted is that as defined is that by the Crime & Disorder Act (1998):

> Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as (the defendant).

There might be still some debate as to how Anti-Social Behaviour is or should be defined but clearly a consensus has been emerging on the various types of behaviours that are deemed to constitute *'anti-social.'*

However important it is to consider behaviour being *'in the eye of the beholder'* (so to speak) and whilst recognising that it can differ from group to group, e.g., landlords, residents, young

people, and business people, a wide range of research by government or those independent of government has offered a clear understanding.

The PAT 8 Report on Anti-Social Behaviour (2000) gave us some idea when it lists the 10 most commonly expressed problems based on research by NACRO in Brixton and this was later advanced by the Home Affairs Select Committee (2003) and Toolkit Audit (2004) when a Typology of Anti-Social Behaviour was developed grouping behaviours into 4 categories:

- ➢ Misuse of Public Space
- ➢ Disregard for community/personal well-being
- ➢ Acts directed at people
- ➢ Environment Damage.

This Typology is useful in that it provides a means by which to frame behaviours. It will form the basis of my study because not only does it allow me to consider and place behaviours into a logical framework but will help me to formulate recommendations based on findings.

Summary

I have begun the study by looking at commonly held beliefs about Anti-Social Behaviour and whilst outlining some of the difficulties in sourcing literature that explores it in a localised context I have managed to contextualise the subject matter by considering factors that are relative including the policy context with which approaches to Anti-Social Behaviour exists and has evolved over the last 25 years.

I have also contrasted some of those some commonly held beliefs with facts about Anti-Social Behaviour so as to 'paint' a truer picture and looked at how both the global context and 'the Troubles' has served to not only lower young peoples expectations in relation to life

chances but accustom them to methods of using violence to deal with conflict. Set against a policy context that has evolved largely from a right wing perspective and combined with difficulties in defining Anti-Social Behaviour has led to the development of policies which has been channelled in one direction without proper debate although a useful framework with which to contextualise behaviours has evolved and has been adopted for the purpose of this study.

Context

Anti-Social Behaviour is viewed primarily as something done by young people against society (Brown, 1998). This view has evolved over the last few years in particular with the development of the 'Respect' Agenda and has been reinforced (largely) by a sympathetic media (Raynor and Vanstone 2002, Williamson 2005) reporting in pursuit of the 'hard sell' or 'moral high ground' in order to 'propagate' a particular viewpoint. The impact of this is that society then fails to recognise young people's vulnerability to crime (Brown, 1998).

Irrespective of a newspaper's political bias, be it traditionally left or right wing or centre ground, the media has become an intrinsic player in our everyday lives and has dictated relative positions as it sees fit.

It has campaigned on a range of *'moral panics'* fuelling the public's fears about certain issues be it *'Name and Shame', 'Trial by Media'* or attempting to claim the *'Moral High Ground'* as in the case of the killing of Jamie Bulger (Brown, 1998).

Media might be split along political lines on most issues but where Anti-Social Behaviour is concerned, it seems to have adopted an almost united front and, aligned with government policy, has succeeded in vilifying young people (YouthNet, 2005).

So what is the evidence to suggest this and why is it that society seems to readily accept young people as prime culprits of anti-social behaviour? In order to understand this we have to begin by examining the latter point. There is no doubt that many young people perpetrate what is commonly accepted as Anti-Social Behaviour. On the surface there seems to be an abundance of evidence to verify this be it the numbers of reported incidents, e.g., 'The One Day Count' which recorded over 66, 000 incidents on one particular day in September 2003

in England and Wales (Audit and Strategies Toolkit, 2004), or video, close circuit TV, internet and mobile phone images of young people being involved in Anti-Social Behaviour, e.g., 'happy slapping' or the number of arrests made, cautions issued or diversionary schemes in operation.

Consider the front-page headlines, 24 hours news reporting, the increasing number of ASBOs being applied for and issued, the constant bombardment of seemingly declining moral standards among today's youth it is understandable that the public perception and beliefs about young people go hand in hand.

The Government have also 'weighed in' so to speak by acknowledging a 'decline in values and morals' and used this prognosis to develop and implement its 'Respect Agenda.' Following on from the infamous 'Back to Basics' campaign by the Tories in the early 1990s to restore moral order, the Blair Government has addressed Anti-Social Behaviour within a political context (Raynor and Vanstone 2002) and drawn lines in their battle to restore values that previous generations aspired to or upheld and therefore to be seen to address the 'moral decline' impacting on society (Millie et al, 2005). This has also had the effect of enabling the Media to 'demonise' many groups in society, most notably (apart from young people) young mothers (Herron, 2005).

The portrayal of young people through the media has been without doubt the most influential factor in determining public perception with regard to Anti-Social Behaviour but what is the evidence to confirm that this is actually the case?

'Young People Now' Magazine run a weekly column entitled *'The Ferret….Digs behind the headlines'* and has found much evidence to argue that the portrayal of young people in the media is prejudiced, misleading, exaggerated and often factually incorrect.

In February of this year it highlighted an article by the Daily Mirror where it was reported that police were *'hunting hoodie yobs'* for putting graffiti in the Manchester area but were 'stunned' to learn that the culprit was indeed a granddad.   *'The Ferret…. '(Nov 05)* highlighted a story by the Guardian entitled *'Pocket Money hits £2.1bn a year'* but 'neglected to mention that 5.8m parents do not give any pocket money at all to their children.'

In the same month, The Ferret drew attention to how The Daily Telegraph, The Times and The Sun revealed *'shocking news'* that in research commissioned by the British Heart Foundation 36% of 1000 8-14 year olds failed to identify correctly that potato was the main ingredient of chips but failed to point out that 64% did. It also highlighted Daily Mail headlines (May 05) *'Girl aged 10 prescribed the pill'*. The Ferrett went on to point out that *'analysis of the medical records by the University of Aberdeen found that 23 young women under 13 had been prescribed the pill which equated to 0.06571% of the 35, 000 records studied.'*

Compare this approach to some of those stories 'The Ferret' unearthed in July, August and September '05 editions of Young People Now. A 'Sponge Bob Square Pants' Mural project was attacked by a 40 year old father in Suffolk and as the column points out, the local paper did not use any of the normal terms such as 'yobs' and 'louts' and even reported the Judge who commented that the actions of the 40 year old father were *'entirely understandable'* as *'putting graffiti on boarded-up shops will only encourage kids to hang about there.'*

Another graffiti project in Kent had actually reduced graffiti but when a resident tried to remove it with a screw driver his story was reported in the Mail on Sunday and began with *'When Fred Williams opened his curtains and saw that ugly graffiti-strewn hoardings had appeared overnight opposite his house his civic duty seemed clear.'*

A local paper in Norfolk, The Eastern Daily Press headline read *'Councillor defends jailed man'* after a resident threw a firework and chased a group of young people assaulting one with a machete before firing off a shotgun after he alleged being plagued by them (although the police had no record of any complaints). The Councillor defended the accused even though he wasn't in court to hear the evidence.

Katherine Spence (Sunday Journal) wrote in September of last year *'...society spirals out of control with anti-social behaviour and increasing reports of young thugs and gangs taking control of the streets...'* These are not the words of a middle-aged reporter but rather a young person who has not yet reached 30! The very Newspaper group she worked with has been renowned for constant negative stories about young people – an example of this was in a 2 week period between 4th and 18th October 2005 it ran 6 negative front page or headline stories on young people and anti-social behaviour (see appendices) about the area I work in.

In April of last year Steve Barrett, Editor of Young People Now, wrote,

> The research [commissioned from Mori by YPN in 2004] showed that almost 3 out of 4 stories about young people are negative and that only 8% of stories about young people carry quotes from young people – at best lazy journalism, at worst blind prejudice.

Clearly there is evidence to argue that the portrayal of young people in the media is prejudiced. Research has shown that the *Media still has a long way to go,* (Goddard 2006) in addressing this negative image and therefore the Media are not only responsible for reinforcing the negative perceptions of young people but ensuring that the association of young people with anti-social behaviour remains even though the majority of ASBOs issued up to and including November 2005 were awarded against adults (Young People Now, 2006).

Whilst it's useful to 'keep an eye' on how papers present the image of young people and it's entirely understandable that 'Young People Now' with a specific remit to write on the subject

of youth affairs will naturally be sympathetic and strive to defend this section of the population, it's also important that 'Young People Now' do not loose sight of the fact, that for many of the population perception is everything and the fear of Anti-Social Behaviour is real, particularly in deprived areas.

The need to respond to Anti-Social Behaviour is uppermost in people's minds and for many if that means the use of ASBOs to curtail certain behaviours this will be the chief consideration and not how young people are portrayed in the media.

For example, Richard Garlick, Editor of 'Regeneration and Renewal' comments *'ASBOs deserve defending as a valuable tool with which local communities can uphold decent standards of behaviour'*. He also quotes Andrew Puddephatt, a former leader of pressure group Liberty when referring to civil rights campaigners *'were acting like three-year-old children by attacking ASBOs without suggesting solutions to the problems they address.'* Eric Waugh (2005) takes up this theme when writing in the Belfast Telegraph

> ….the new era of human rights imposed by law has been a bit of a social disaster – for two reasons. The first is that the agitators of human rights are seen by the community at large as fighting the wrong battles. The second is that, when the human rights lobby wins, a majority of the citizens who finance it – ordinary taxpayers – are usually disgusted and angered.

Ferdinand Mount, writing in the Sunday Times notes that *'since capital punishment was abolished the number of homicides has increased from around 300 a year to almost 700. Experts like to blame unemployment and stresses of modern life. But can we be sure that this increase is totally unrelated to the ever-growing and well publicised leniency of the courts?'*

Police clear up rates in England and Wales have fallen from 40% in 1980 to 23% in 2002 (Harris, 2003) and illustrates the crisis for many in the Criminal Justice System were the rights of the victim and for the larger part communities are sacrificed in favour of the rights of the perpetrator. And whilst many campaign to protect the rights of those facing accusation in an bid to uphold the very essence of the Criminal Justice System, i.e., *'innocent until proven guilty'* this is little comfort for those who are living in areas where crime and Anti-Social Behaviour are predominant.

There is sympathy among the media towards the victim and the plight of communities and the seemingly growing moral decline and of course as much as reporting should be balanced its imperative that 'Young People Now' should be not only defending young people but also ensuring that it is promoting an agenda of Responsibility among youth services and young people.

Government Policy

The Fifth Report of the Select Committee on Home Affairs denied the problem of anti-social behaviour has been *'exaggerated by the Government or played up by the media.'* However, a report by the Institute of Ideas (2004) refutes this claiming that the government has both *'reacted to and reinforced panics about crime and disorder, institutional practices and initiatives based upon society's sense of fear and anxiety.'*

A key policy initiative of the Labour government when it came to power in 1997 was a commitment to tackle Anti-Social behaviour. The introduction of ASBOs in 1999 and subsequent issue of around 6, 500 of them since then (to January 2006) is a testament to this. However, their credibility has been tainted somewhat for two reasons.

Firstly there has been reluctance among practitioners in some council areas in Britain to use them as their effectiveness has been questioned (the vast majority of ASBOs have only been

issued in the last 2 years) and also Central Government have been accused of linking the issuing of ASBOs to the threat of withdrawal of funding if there is a failure to do so (News, 2006).

At the beginning of 2006, Labour launched it's 'Respect Action Plan' detailing key points of how it proposes to address the Respect Agenda including a focus on schools, families, communities, engaging challenging families, enforcement and community justice, and activities for Children and Young People.

Critics say that it is merely a cocktail of policies already in existence (Young People Now, 2006) whilst others view it as an attempt to address the issue. This plan will not affect Northern Ireland. However, the emphasis on the 'Respect Agenda' brings into sharp focus the issues of <u>respect</u>.

Tony Blair, during his Speech at the Labour Party Conference in October 2005 said,

> Respect is about more than crime. It's about the loss of value that is a necessary part of any strong community; proper behaviour; good conduct, the notion that the other person matters.

The notion of *"the other person matters"* is a key issue. If the other person matters the relationship must be reciprocal. Respect is a two way thing (Wylie 2006, Morgan 2005, Das-Gupta 2005, Williamson 2005). The most serious concerns though are about the nuts & bolts of the Government's drive to cut crime and Anti-Social Behaviour which seems increasingly packaged up with the policy idea of 'Respect' *"that has emerged since the general election in May"* (Sweetland, 2005)

Arguably there is evidence to suggest that the Respect Agenda is 'a one way street' and is being driven by a punitive agenda that is none too dissimilar from previous policy initiatives of the 70s, 80s and 90s (Lloyd, et al 2000).

Our approach to crime and disorder

We live in a punitive society that fundamentally believes and therefore assumes that everyone knows the difference between right and wrong. This of course dictates that any wrong done should be punished irregardless of age, experience, learning, knowledge, maturity or circumstance and does not lend or (perhaps more so) allow itself to examine the reasons why individuals act in a particular way nor consider their motivations for doing so either (Brown, 1998). Of course evidence presented in court (for and against) allows for the examination of circumstances but our society tends to want retribution - punishment as opposed to rehabilitation.

Society's approach to young people is unsympathetic at best. As I will go on to illustrate in the next section growing up in modern society can be much more difficult than in previous generations. There are many confusing messages that society sends out to young people – for example, young people cannot vote until they're 18 but can have sex when they're 17 (16 in Britain) can fight in military combat when they are 16. The reduced minimum wage applies until the age of 21, New Deal runs up to 24, and a lower level of state benefits applies until you are 25. Young people are defined as 'young people' up until the age of 25, however, this has implications for how we approach crime and disorder for once you turn 18 you are treated in the same way as an adult might be and for many this can mean a custodial sentence.

It is true that for some who become involved in anti-social behaviour that a life of crime awaits. However this is only true for a very small percentage and contrary to what is often portrayed in the media the vast majority of young people do not become involved in anti-social behaviour let alone a life of crime. But beyond anti-social behaviour what do we know about crime and young people? Roberts (2005) outlines what is understood by offending behaviour

> About one in eight young people are serious criminal offenders, and one in 12 are frequent offenders….To qualify as a frequent offender, for example, a young person will have admitted to committing at least six offences over a twelve-month period-offences such as minor thefts from work or school, or pushing or slapping someone without causing any injury. The great majority of 'serious offenders', on the other hand, had admitted to committing an assault with injury – where the injury could be minor bruising

Offending behaviour tends to peak at 19 (Stubbs 2005) or during the transition to adulthood the consequence of which can be damaging in the long-term or as in the words of Burke (2005) *'custody disrupts the transition to adulthood….'* Many critics have long questioned the logic of imprisoning young people and adults together. Between 1989 and 2005, 28 children have died in custody (Evans 2005).

It is not my desire nor is it my intention to discuss the merits of young people and adults being 'locked up together' but in terms of the broader question of how to deal with anti-social behaviour it is important to consider it in the context of society's feelings towards young people and beliefs about their behaviour. The perception of crime will often determine society's attitude and more importantly governmental response to it.

For example, an audit by Derry City's Community Safety Partnership found that *"31% of respondents believed that youth offending was very common or quite common"* whereas the areas I work in was even higher with figures for Galliagh and Carnhill at 59% and 53% respectively. This is in contradiction of the Chief Constables Annual Report where in 2005 he had reported there were almost 10,000 fewer crimes than in the year before. What this does though is serve to underline the change required in dealing with crime. As Hugh Orde (Belfast Telegraph, 2006) describes,

> Fighting this fear of crime is almost as important as actually fighting crime itself. Fear of crime breeds a sense of insecurity, which is not only detrimental to a community but can also have a negative effect on confidence in the police.

The approach to crime across the UK is essentially a debate between those who believe that being tough will essentially reduce and prevent crime and those who believe that in order to deal with crime we must identify the causes and then implement measures to alleviate the causes. However, much of the resources set aside to address crime and anti-social behaviour are geared towards cure and not prevention. (Lentin 2002)

Summary

I have highlighted how a combination of the media and government policy has had an adverse effect on the perception of young people and has succeeded in stifling much needed debate which many feel is necessary so as to formulate a more effective response to the issue of Anti-Social Behaviour. I have discussed recent developments in Government policy particularly that with regard to the 'Respect' Agenda and how this ultimately has served as an extension of the debate between those who advocate the use of punishment and those who view rehabilitation as the primary function of the Criminal Justice System. The seemingly obsessive nature of the public with Anti-Social Behaviour regularly catapults young people to the centre of arguments where demands for action is based on perceptions of young people and crime/anti-social behaviour rather than fact.

Why do young people become involved in Anti-Social Behaviour? Whilst the list is not prescriptive it does include impulsivity or hyperactivity, learning disability, truancy and exclusion from school, inadequate parental supervision, neglect and abuse, family conflict, parents with a criminal history, poverty and poor housing, lack of training and employment, drug and alcohol abuse, association with delinquent peers, erratic lifestyles, bravado, peer-pressure, selfishness, compensation for feelings of insecurity and inferiority, a belief that rule-breaking does not result in negative consequences, etc. (Off the Streets 2004)

Stubbs (2005) tells us that *'...young people are at risk of falling into crime for numerous reasons: a mixture of poverty, family break-up, peer pressure, unemployment and access to housing.'* Willis (2005) takes this concept further:

> With the close link between crime and socio-economic disadvantage; the importance of effective correctional services to regeneration is clear…ill-thought-out change will handicap efforts to bring offenders back onto the straight and narrow in the short term, without bringing benefits in years to come.

I would like to speculate on the range of factors that many believe contribute to anti-social behaviour. In addition to those mentioned there are a number of other contributing factors: parenting, alcohol, truancy, violence, family, mental health, gender (young men) and role models.

Parenting

When reports of young people involved in Anti-Social Behaviour appear in newspapers, in addition to some of the colourful terminology used it's usually followed with reference to parents or a questioning of parental knowledge as to the whereabouts of their off spring. The question really being posed is one regarding the capacity of modern day parents to supervise

or control their kids (Lloyd et al 2000) or to govern their children in such a way as to ensure conformity within society.

Much of this is directed at young single mothers and their (oft referred) dubious distinction of introducing to society their 'ill-reared' and 'ill-mannered' children with no values and little or no respect for people or property or anything remotely resembling authority. Even this 'image' has been parodied in modern culture, i.e., Little Britain's 'Vicky Pollard'.

To view parenting as a contributing factor to Anti-Social Behaviour is to assume or to insinuate that parenting or the ability to parent is distinctly worse now than it was in years gone by. Of course such an assumption is without due consideration to the current pressures that parents now face as opposed to 2 or 3 generations ago.

Society has changed but shouldn't the virtues or qualities that underpin effective parenting remain the same? Rogers and Brennan (2005) offer some insight as to how parenting has changed

> Parents born in the 1950s did not want the monotonous weekends of their childhood when there were no money for leisure activities and anything to do after Sunday lunch….By the 1980s, children were being showered with material possessions their parents could never have dreamt of. Generational divisions were eroding and many parents preferred to see themselves as friends of their children rather than the killjoys they considered their own parents.

Implicit in this statement is the notion that securing popular appeal by aiming to please our children is more important than encouraging a strong sense of values among young people grow up with clear principles and morals. Hibbert (2005) would seem to echo this

> …the worst mistake parents can make are to treat the family as a democracy; to fail to set boundaries for their children; and to reinforce socially unacceptable behaviour by condoning it.

Knight (2005) & (2001), Agenda (2001) & Sunday Journal (2005) serve to reinforce this as does Williamson (2005)

> There needs to be a clear sense that adulthood involves the protection of a culture that takes responsibility for the nurture and emotional development of our children.

This might simply acknowledge that parenting has had to evolve in order to respond to change and is no less effective now as it is different yet views expressed above seem to convey that 'moral decline' has led to a lessening of parental responsibilities and therefore can be linked with the growth in anti-social behaviour. However, as we already know, solutions to Anti-Social Behaviour are not solely restricted to parenting.

Alcohol

Alcohol Concern has identified Anti-Social Behaviour, violence and accidents as just some of the problems affecting adolescents and estimates 23, 000 incidents of alcohol related violence every week as well as 920, 000 under-18s living at home where one or two parents have an alcohol problem (Young People Now, 2006). The *Quick guide to…. Alcohol consumption* informs readers that *'The link with Anti-Social Behaviour is further supported by research from the Health Promotion Agency but this doesn't even consider other consequences including one in seven young people having unprotected sex'* (Mc Cafferty 2005) and the costs to society which is estimated at £206bn (Kerr 2006). The link between alcohol and anti-social behaviour and crime is well documented but more importantly what is more commonly ignored is the connection between the behaviour of adults and alcohol and the impact this has on young people. Thompson (2004) points out that *'...drinking culture is acquired behaviour and it is learned from adults.'*

Truancy

Research has shown that there is a clear link between Truancy and crime. Raymond Curry writing for Young People Now last year on the subject of long-term funding for Youth Justice commented, *'I think of research undertaken by Dr Roy Hullin and others at Leeds University in the late 1970s. This research confirmed the relationship of truancy with crime.'* Research by Boyle and Sandford (2004) also showed this to remain the same:

> Truants and excluded pupils are more likely to be sexually active and smoke, drink and take drugs, which pose obvious health risks…in addition, there are disturbing links with crime and punishment.

The majority of those who truant are young men. I will consider gender and its link to Anti-Social Behaviour and crime further on in this study.

Family

The issue of dysfunctional families or family breakdown is very much seen as a determining factor in whether or not young people will become involved in anti-social behaviour and ultimately the Criminal Justice System. The state of families across the UK has been the subject of much conjecture and debate and in particular how the once extended and now the modern day nuclear family have changed almost beyond recognition. Of course society keeps evolving and with it what we know and come to accept as 'family'. However, if most young people involved in anti-social behaviour are as research has shown from 'broken homes' the question of whether we are doing anything to attach enough importance to the family has to be posed. Such a question was posed in a Sunday Times editorial (September 2000):

> What happens when you create a society in which marriage is not encouraged, let alone rewarded? And when you embellish it with a tax and benefits system in which unmarried mothers are often better off financially without a man around the house*?*

The question posed is perhaps answered further on in the editorial –

> In the past quarter of a century, the proportion of children being brought up in lone-parent households has more than tripled from 8% to 25%....The evidence shows decisively that children who perform best at school and succeed in later life are from stable two-parent families.

Is it just coincidence that the rising tide of anti-social behaviour can be linked with that of the growth in lone-parent households? This would lend support to those who would go as far as suggesting that the rise in anti-social behaviour is a direct result of young mothers and would explain why this group is often demonised in the media. But is this really the case? Research by the (O'Hara, 2004) contradicts this particular view:

> There are no stereotypical young parents and nor is there a stereotypical experience of parenthood….The participating young parents, particularly Young Fathers strongly indicated a need for cultural perceptions to catch up with reality.

Many writers would explain the lack of positive male role models in the lives of young men is by far the largest contributing factor. And this I will go on to look at but if there is no encouragement from government for families to stay together or cement their relationship through marriage and thus rewarded by a more sympathetic benefits system then surely we cannot be critical of lone parent households when the very system that the governments operates encourages individuals to '*go it alone?*'

Mental Health

The issue of mental health and its connection with those involved in anti-social behaviour, offending and criminal behaviour and those already imprisoned is overwhelming. *"As many as eight out of 10 children in custody have some form of mental health problem, and one in four has a history of being in care."* (Evans 2005). An inspection of Prisons in 2001 found that 50% of young people on remand had a mental health problem, "10 times the level in the population as a whole."

Steve Barrett writing in Young People Now, about television documentary '*Kids behind bars'* wrote

> Many of the young people, usually from chaotic or non-existent family backgrounds, were cast adrift and left to survive on their own. They received virtually no parental support while growing up.

In 2004 just over one in 10 children and young people aged 5 to 16 had a clinically diagnosed disorder. Tim Burke draws the connection of mental health with that of social and economic factors *'....if you are poor, undereducated and living in a rented property with a step family in a grotty area, you could have problems.'* Writing about research carried out by the Priory Group into adolescence where they found *'an unacceptably high proportion suffer from mental health issues that adversely affect their lives',* Burke highlights Mental Health as closely related to class –5% of young people in social class one (professionals) as compared with 14% in social class five (unskilled occupations) have Mental Health problems.

Caroline Hensby, who works with ADHD Support Group, Adders, lends further support to the notion of mental health being connected with anti-social behaviour

> If you look at the condition, the problems include a lack of concentration, short attention spans, being easily distracted, short-term memory, impulsiveness and being easily led. It's very easy for these young people to get into crime because they can't always curb their impulses; they are more likely to lash out without thinking. It's not an excuse, but it can be an underlying factor.

Pam Knight (2005) draws the connection with anti-social behaviour when she says *'The drive to stamp it out [anti-social behaviour]....have failed to address is one important cause of challenging behaviour – learning difficulties.'*

Violence

Hellen & Rufford (1997) tell us that *'Between 3% and 10% of young people grow up in violent homes, either as victims or witnesses.'* We live in a society where violence had very much become the norm and therefore has become an acceptable means of dealing with issues. This is not something that has evolved in recent times but rather seems to form part of our culture and our psyche.

Even after the ceasefires of 1994 were followed by the Good Friday Agreement in 1999 it seems the majority of the population across Northern Ireland, in fact the whole of the island of Ireland, had 'bought into peace' but the culture of violence has failed to diminish.

For example, between 1998 and 2000 Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries shot two hundred and seventy one young people under 20 and six hundred and six between 20 and 29 equating to 23% and 55%; assaulted four hundred and four under 20 and seven hundred and twenty-six between 20 and 29 again equating to 35% and 48% respectively (2005).

The use of violence seems to be almost the sole responsibility of males and features almost extensively among populations drawn from working class areas or areas with high deprivation. There is clear evidence that poverty and violence are linked.

Esther Mc Guinness, speaking at a seminar entitled 'Beyond Sensationalism' in 2004 offers some insight into why this is:

> Whilst by no means all participants in urban violence are from socially deprived areas or communities, the various injustices of discrimination, inequality, blocked opportunities, and claims of police harassment in some areas, have been major contributors to the urban violence which is played out in towns and cities at night.

Young Men

for the most part the dominant constructions of juvenile delinquency are

masculine and class specific (Evans 2002)

The issue of young men's involvement in Anti-Social Behaviour is well documented.

Evidence has shown that young men are more likely to be involved in offending behaviour

than females. It's estimated that up to 80% of adjudicated offenders are male (Lentin 2002).

There are obviously underlying causes for young people being involved in Anti-Social

Behaviour. In her study Lentin (2002) found that

> …..amongst 12-17 year old boys factors associated with persistent offending
> included drug taking, educational disaffection, and the influence of family and
> friends. Persistent offending was five times more common amongst those
> taking drugs compared to those who abstained."

This is useful in understanding factors that link young men involved in offending behaviour

but in terms of young men themselves as a group growing up in society. Many researchers

have raised the issue of a loss of identity as significant in explaining why young men here are

seemingly inclined to become involved.

Harland (2001) describes young men as using public spaces to *'perform and prove*

themselves' whilst Jeffs and Smith (1993) argue that the changing role of young males within

the *'disappearance of age and youth specific cultures'* accounts for their feelings of isolation

and having no place. Murtagh (2004) citing Hardiman outlines three themes where men are

expected to sacrifice themselves, protect and provide for women and are valued only in terms

of what they can achieve. Once this is lost young men look for other outlets to express their

identity often manifesting itself in negative behaviours.

Role Models

When the 'adult world' criticises the behaviour of young people it does so based on the assumption that young people should know the difference between good and bad and right and wrong. It is not unreasonable for the public to assume this but does it in actual fact mask many of the underlying issues that young people face? But whose responsibility is it to teach young people values? Of course society shares this, i.e., parents, education, peers, etc. However, young people often take learning from their heroes or as the case may be, role models.

Young people need role models – the only question that remains is whether or not role models are or should be positive or negative? This has been brought sharply into focus in recent times with the creation of that famed creature called 'celebrity'. Those in the public eye have often been the focus of the public's attention as a result of what they have achieved but with the advent of the internet, 24 hour television and 'real-life' programmes, fame has become the new currency and therefore virtual unknowns can become celebrities overnight. Ordinary everyday people with little or no talent can become as famous as those famed for their achievements, e.g., Jade Goody, Chantelle. 'Posh Spice' is now more famed for being Mrs David Beckham than her singing career just as Colleen McLaughlin is famous for being Wayne Rooney's girlfriend, having earned an estimated £5m last year.

What is the impact of this kind of status on young people? Young people view celebrity status as a means to an end. Whereas celebrity status used to come with the job, these days becoming a celebrity is a job on its own. For young people this brings status, it raises profile, it provides a quick return in terms of money, it creates adulation and fame and those on the receiving end feel wanted and desired.

However, this kind of fame comes with a price in that to not only achieve and sustain fame and remain in the public eye celebrity behaviour becomes more and more outrageous, risqué and headline grabbing. For many young women adulation can come in the form of removing your clothes. Research by The Lab found

> Of the nearly 1000 girls surveyed, 63% found being a glamour model most appealing. A quarter thought that being a lap dancer would be a good profession but just 3% picked the teaching profession. Nearly half of those that took part saw Titmuss as a role model, compared to 33% for Jordan, 7% for Anita Ruddock, 9% for JK Rowling and just 4% for Germaine Greer. Asked what they would rather be famous for, 89% chose being recognised and a celebrity and 11% picked achievement with little recognition

Unfortunately, this tends to create the expectation that everyone can have their '15 minutes of fame' and therefore fills many young people with false expectation. It also sends out the message that often-extreme behaviour can bring fame and fortune without really considering how to get there. Recently Young People Now Magazine reported that, *'....87% said society had become too influenced by celebrity, and 58% said celebrities lacked talent. But 81% percent said they would like to be one.'*

Programmes like Big Brother, Fame Academy, Pop Idol, Celebrity Love Island and I'm a Celebrity… have taken virtual unknowns and 'B-list' (sometimes 'Z-list') celebrities and put them in the public eye. Most of these programmes has provided success for females but with virtually no male role models emerging. This begs the question: who and where are the male role models and if they still exist, what do they do? A report by the Sunday Times in 2000 offers some thoughts:

> Kids nowadays are hooked on superheroes and monsters in comics and videos, and the new-style wrestling is really just an extension of that. It's as if these strange and bizarre characters have walked off the page into the ring

Often reduced to thick, testosterone filled, muscle-laden oaths with a penchant for violence or wimsy, perfume wearing, skin waxing, cat walk styled robots, appropriate male role models

or more accurately the lack of them are viewed as a key factor in the battle against or as the case may already be the development of anti-social behaviour.

Growing up in Modern Society

The realities and pressures facing young people are vastly different and less compromising than that of their parents and Grand Parents (Holley et al 2005). Much of the support mechanisms and structures of family life so apparent in the last century have all but broken down or disappeared leaving many young people more isolated, less informed, more vulnerable and at greater risk.

Times have changed and whilst many children and young people might not know what it means to live on the rations that their grandparents experienced during the Second World War, what is certain is that young people grow up in a vastly different society that previous generations occupied in their childhood. Kevin Williams summarises this when he says

> It's never been easy being a teenager. But today there are contradictory pressures on young people. There is pressure to grow up fast, but the adult world of work, home ownership and having children has receded for young people into a much later period of their lives.

At a personal level the needs and desires of young people in Northern Ireland have changed so dramatically from that of the aspirations expressed in the latter half of the 20th century. Demographic changes including population shifts and greater mobility has affected employment trends whilst the collapse of once thriving industries has meant that generations of young people have had to diversify, learn new skills, and consider options more carefully. This has meant young people are under increased pressure to perform academically, get a job and have money in the pocket. This has led to the growth of particular sub-groups: unskilled and less skilled young people and young adults, male violent group culture, constituency of lone parents (Wilson, 1998) and the attraction of a more deviant culture.

Technological advances has meant the creation of home entertainment such as video, DVD, satellite T.V., and computer games whilst communication devices such as mobile phones and IT have become ever more sophisticated but carry inherent dangers. Some young people have adapted these devices for the purpose of bullying with one in four 11-19 year olds in the UK having been bullied or threatened via their mobile phone or PC. (Goddard 2005)

With the advent of sophisticated computer graphics we have seen the pushing of new boundaries that extol the lesser virtues of violence, bloodshed, gang warfare and very recently bullying (Healy 2005). The dangers of these images were highlighted by Knight (2005), '*By the time they reach adolescence the impact of these disturbing images is lessened, presumably because people's emotional response have by then been bludgeoned out of recognition…..*'

Vastly changing lifestyles including increased commercial and cultural pressures including the sexualisation of young people has ensured that young people are under greater pressure including that of their peers, market forces and their own perceptions of self-image. (Andrea Wren, 2006; Manktelow & Hegarty 2005; Driscoll 2003)

> A whole series of commercial and cultural pressures are pushing children in one direction and that is towards early adulthood…Children feel less secure in themselves, because the individualisation of society means that they feel that they have to assert themselves and find an identity early on….Old fashioned childhood diseases may have been eradicated but they are being replaced by asthma and obesity and childhood depression. (Driscoll, 2003)

So what has changed? At every level, change is here - be it, the Assembly, Equality legislation, or the Human Rights Bill. There's been commissions on policing, parades, victims, reviews of the Youth Service, Formal Education and Local Government, new ideology and terminology such as TSN, promoting Social Inclusion, Lifelong Learning and tightening up of standards with Public Service Agreements, Quality Assurance and National Occupational Standards. All this in addition to vestiges of the past such as five education and four health boards and numerous health trusts.

Young people in Northern Ireland thus live at the interface of two types of transition, one societal and one personal and have to cope with the many challenges which both transitions evoke. (JEDI Audit, p72)

Adults often talk about it in a comparative context, i.e., with that of children and young people growing up in previous decades when there was 'much more respect'. There is much evidence to suggest adults, middle-aged and elderly alike believe that the reason for this is the lowering of moral standards, that young people do not possess the same morals, values and beliefs they had when they themselves were growing up. Whilst many can reasonably argue that this is the case and the media has often portrayed this through numerous 'moral panics', failure to examine or debate causes of anti-social behaviour has stifled understanding and often led to black and white arguments, i.e., that anti-social behaviour is a choice between good and bad behaviour.

Many older generations will recall difficult times, hard times, times when there was less wealth but greater respect for people and property. On the face of it there certainly seems to be more of everything, easier access to it and less respect for the means by which you get there or the people or property you discard in the process. Can we be consoled by the fact that the vast majority of Young People will probably grow up into the adults that contrast modernity with that of their own childhood and lament memories past?

In this modern world we still like to think that children and young people grow up with clear values. We assume that a combination of parents, school, peers, the wider community, religion, etc will ensure that generations growing up will understand the difference between right and wrong, good and bad. We are often shocked when they fail to demonstrate this. We then set about vilifying children and young people for showing a complete disregard for people and property or for not assuming any responsibility for their behaviour. This is not to assume that every child who engages in some sort of anti-social or criminally motivated

behaviour does not know what he or she is doing. However, it is to assume that children have grown up with clear guidance on the difference.

Children and young people like adults, are susceptible to various influences of negative behaviour. However, most adults are in a position were they can determine or are at least better informed to decide between 'good and bad' and 'right and wrong.' We should also accept that the adult world has blurred these lines and often what constitutes the difference between either is difficult to see.

In a society that has normalised stone throwing, petrol bombing, intimidation, hijacking, burning, assault, shooting, knee-capping, bombing, killing, etc, etc, is it any wonder that children and young people have grown to understand and engage in this type of behaviour. We have created a culture and left a legacy that has made this behaviour acceptable. In a society where adults frequent pubs and clubs to the early hours, particularly at the weekends, often in varying states of drunkenness, should we be at all surprised when young people engage in the same type of behaviour, be it in the city centre, park, lane way or on a grassy bank?

The issue of young people and in particular, young men has been dominating the 'social landscape' for a considerable period of time. Their place in society has never been so uncertain whilst their behaviour has never been so unpredictable.

The comparison between modern society and that of previous generations is almost constantly articulated through the Respect Agenda. The adult world comes to look upon respect as something that is not earned but rather forms the basis of human existence and when young people fail to conform to this notion it disrupts the social order. The adult world is at pains to explain this disorder and yet fails to take account of both its own behaviour and socio-

economic factors as contributing to Anti-Social Behaviour but rather label young people's behaviour as a breach of moral standards and thus scapegoat them for ills that beset society.

In an effort to contextualise the subject matter I have had to first of all examine that which constitutes Anti-social Behaviour, the context with which it exists including consideration of the reality of Anti-Social Behaviour, its historical context including the political conflict in Northern Ireland, the role of the Media and how together with government policy has succeeded in politicising the issue through the Respect Agenda which has ultimately led to young people being placed at the centre of the debate around declining moral standards. I have endeavoured to explain why young people do become involved in Anti-Social Behaviour in terms of underlying causes and the pressures of growing up in modern society and ultimately the impact this has on young people.

This research is necessary in that further examination of Anti-Social Behaviour is paramount as little or no effort has been made in the Greater Shantallow Area to examine the reasons as to why it exists. This study has been necessary in not only beginning to address the issue with young people but to consider how best the issue can be addressed. It is also important to make the argument that there is no single factor that adequately explains the existence of Anti-Social Behaviour as opposed to the consistent negative portrayal of young people by local media who fail to treat the issue seriously preferring to sensationalise than carrying out proper investigative journalism. When these factors are considered the purpose of this study is to provide a greater understanding as to what Anti-Social Behaviour is and why it exists so that answers emanating from findings can better inform local approaches among those tasked with delivering services to the community and responding to need.

Summary

In this section I have outlined some of the reasons why young people become involved in negative types of behaviour drawing upon the research of others to illustrate changes in society, which enhances the likelihood of young people becoming involved in Anti-Social Behaviour. This includes a skewing of boundaries between children and parents where rules governing behaviour are concerned, increased drinking among young people and a growth in urban violence particularly among young men. Changes to the traditional nuclear and extended family have led to the increase in single parent households with the effect that many young men are growing up without the influence of a positive and stable male influence in their lives whilst an increase in levels of truancy and mental health issues is proving significant. Not only are many young men lacking in positive male role models but the notion of role model has all but changed where achievement is no longer the key but rather fame and fortune in the shape of celebrity. This combined with a loss of identity means that young men are finding it more and more difficult to locate themselves effectively making them more vulnerable to behaviours that results in kudos from their peers but offends the broader community.

Growing up in this modern society might offer much more for young people in terms of wealth and access to technology but comes with a heavier price. There is no longer the security of family and employment that previous generations enjoyed and the pressure to grow up faster and conform to certain behaviours and image is of paramount importance leading to a loss of childhood. The gap between reality and virtual reality is almost non-existent and this has created a culture of demand raising expectation of what is possible to new levels leading to many young people considering life to be unjust whilst many young people are left vulnerable and marginalised in society where the gap between the 'haves' and 'have nots' has steadily grown wider.

METHODOLOGY

How research was conducted

An approach was made to St. Brigid's College, in the Carnhill area of Derry in October 2005. Access to pupils was granted with relative ease due in part to our having already completed 2 pieces of research in 2004 and 2005 and my being a former pupil with already established relationships with many of the teachers.

Target Group

I met with 4 groups of Year 12 (lower 6th year) pupils. Meetings were conducted in the school classroom during first lesson of the normal school day. Pupils were drawn from areas right across the Greater Shantallow Area and gender make-up was both male and female. Lessons formed part of PSE (Personal and Social Education) and because the nature of the subject matter I was researching it could easily be incorporated into the lesson

Approach

Their respective teachers who very briefly explained the purpose of my visit introduced me to each class. I was then left alone to conduct the meeting with pupils. In the interests in getting as honest opinions as possible it was agreed that teachers would not be present during the lesson. Once the teacher left I introduced myself (again), explained a little about Off the Streets and reacquainted them with the purpose of my visit. I adopted an informal approach choosing not to sit at the head of the classroom but rather in amongst pupils. I explained what I was trying to achieve with the study and made connections with two previous pieces of research carried out at St. Brigid's.

Overview

I met and spoke with 84 young people in total, which equates to approximately 9.3% of the school going population. The purpose of my visit was to ask two key questions:

(i) what is anti-social behaviour?

(ii) what are the causes of anti-social behaviour**?**

Many of the young people I spoke with either knew of Off the Streets or had taken part in activities organised by us. I also knew some of the young people (at least by face) and combined with their knowledge and experience of the organisation provided 'smooth passage' and allowed me to concentrate on both key questions. A number of supplementary questions were asked to clarify points raised in addition to pupils expressing strong views on a variety of related matters.

Answers to both questions would allow me to contrast the opinions of pupils with that of already established ideas about what constitutes Anti-Social Behaviour. By examining causes and facilitating further discussion around this allowed me to uncover some of the thinking behind pupils views.

FINDINGS

Discussion led to the collation of two lists – one that in the opinion of participants constituted Anti-Social Behaviour and the other, underlying causes.

Behaviours	Causes
• 'Joyriding' • Theft (& 'selling them on') • Throwing stones • Drinking Alcohol and Taking Drugs • Setting off fireworks • Graffiti • Fighting • Driving around on quads and motorbikes • Breaking into houses	• Drink & Drugs • Peers (Inclusion) & Peer Pressure (Conformity) • Family pressures/background • Boredom • School – relationship with teachers • Peer Pressure • Hormones – biological changes • Doing things for a bit of 'craic' - winding people up • Looking for attention • Adults don't care about you

Both lists are far from definitive and as I will demonstrate by no means as comprehensive as existing lists demonstrate (Audits and Strategies Toolkit, 2004; Select Committee on Home Affairs 2004; Off the Streets 2005).

Before considering the relevance of the lists above I want to begin by summarising what pupils discussed, contextualise the discussion in relation to the questions posed and look at how these factors influence young people's behaviour.

Following examination of discussion I will consider behaviours and causes listed by pupils within the overall context of current thinking around Anti-Social Behaviour and it's implication for approaches in relation to the Greater Shantallow Area.

Classroom Discussion

During the course of the meetings pupils spoke at varying lengths about particular issues: Alcohol, Self-esteem, and Relationships with Parents, Friends and Adults, the Media and the School Environment.

Alcohol

Pupils identified Alcohol and Drugs as both behaviour and cause and whilst evidence exists to link the consumption of alcohol and drugs with that of anti-social behaviour pupils were clearly stating that consumption of alcohol was not for reasons of 'escapism' normally associated with young people drinking but rather as a planned activity that provides a social connection with their friends and peers outside of the school and because it is *'something that adults do.'*

Pupils displayed a considered approach to alcohol with clear knowledge of, preference for and understanding of the drinks in terms of taste, affordability, accessibility and impact. Whilst viewed as a social outlet there was also recognition and acceptance that it was a contributing factor towards Anti-Social Behaviour. Out of 62 young people I questioned 40 admitted to drinking, 8 of which drank on the street but only one had express permission to drink. Eight of those 40 who admitted to drinking also admitted to being 'polattic' drunk at least once. They cited boredom, peer pressure, excitement and an increase in confidence among reasons for drinking.

Self-esteem

As confidence was highlighted as a reason for drinking I enquired of one class (22 pupils) as to whether self-esteem was a contributing factor towards young people choosing to drink? All but one declared they had anything other than 'mid-to-high self-esteem' whilst just over one-quarter said they would change the way they were.

Relationship with Parents, Friends and Adults

Most pupils expressed a positive relationship with their parents and declared that in most cases they received more positive attention from their parents than that of their friends. Attention from adults was not so welcoming with pupils in one class stating that adults *'don't care', 'blame whoever they see' 'complain',* and *'know everything because they've been there done that.'*

The Media

Most pupils (class of 20) who spoke about the media were scathing in their opinions. They looked upon reporters as middle-aged, motivated by money, focused on young people but with no intentions other than to *'stir it'*. There was one person who declared that *'most of it's true'* (reference to headlines) and was barracked for this opinion although one other commented that reporters *'might not know the right story but knew some of it'*.

School Environment

Pupils had much so say about the school environment making numerous suggestions and recommendations, 12 in fact, some of which are almost impractical, i.e., shorter lessons, but equally some practical including more vocational subjects. Significantly one entire class said they would leave *'right now'* if given the opportunity although 13 would finish their exams – worryingly though this is only equates to around two-thirds of that particular class.

So what is the significance of these discussions? What do they tell us? There is clearly apathy among young people towards the media with questions raised over what is reported and how things are reported. Ironically, one pupil who attempted to offer some kind logic or rationale for the way in which stories are reported by the media actually undermined this by declaring in the same sentence that they get 'some of it right' and in doing so summed up what many critics of the media see as the problem, i.e., lazy journalism.

There is much to be accomplished in building relationships between young people and adults and in some cases school, but relationships between young people and parents are stronger than one might expect. Many pupils came across as confident, thoughtful and able decision makers as demonstrated in their approach to alcohol.

In many ways, the pupils that I spoke with defied the common perception of those responsible for Anti-Social Behaviour I referred to in Section 2. This might go some way to explaining their apathy to the media by supporting our contention that the Media is largely responsible for demonising young people.

Pupils who took part in this study were largely able to contribute to discussion, express their opinions freely without fear, identify various behaviours deemed as anti-social as well as rationalise causes and whilst not declaring whether they themselves have been involved in anti-social behaviour clearly understood that some of the activities they engage in, i.e., drinking alcohol, is actually recognised as a cause of Anti-Social behaviour. This begs the question of course – if they know that it might lead to their becoming involved in anti-social behaviour why do young people still do it?

Contextualising Discussion

Pupils talked about the above topics in relation to the question posed on causes of Anti-Social Behaviour. Whilst their discussion was broad and it's not possible to draw much in the way

of conclusions their choice of areas to discuss does suggest that these factors have greater importance in the context of identifying causes. For example, it was clearly stated that one of the causes of anti-social behaviour was relationship with teachers. Whilst it doesn't tell you how and the 'how' in this context is irrelevant – it is significant that 3 of the 5 issues raised relate to relationships with others whilst consumption of alcohol is based on participants need for social connection effectively making 4 issues related to relationships. I would go as far as suggesting that young people's capacity for interaction is an underlying theme that needs to be considered within the context of addressing anti-social behaviour.

How do these factors influence young people's behaviour?

The matters raised are also significant in that they are very much linked with anti-social behaviour. For instance, young people who have a failed relationship within their school context are at risk of engaging in if not already engaged in truanting behaviour and research has show clear links between truanting and Anti-Social Behaviour.

A young person's relationship with others is significant in terms of feeling included, listened to and supported and therefore any deviance from this can create varying levels of instability with the effect of young people seeking support from beyond their immediate 'social circle' and ultimately putting themselves at risk.

Research has also clearly demonstrated the link between consumption of alcohol and Anti-Social Behaviour and therefore if young people feel the need to drink (and as is the case here) to connect with their friends they are putting themselves at risk of engaging in negative behaviours that could prove potentially damaging. Whilst many pupils expressed mid – high levels of self-esteem the importance of self-esteem itself cannot be underestimated. The way in which a young person perceives his or herself can ultimately determine how they interact with others.

So what is the significance of this in relation to Anti-social Behaviour?

Young people's capacities for interaction at all levels of society is essential if they are to successfully navigate their way through life. Young people I spoke to on one hand came across as confident and articulate and very much comfortable engaging in discussion. However, they were clearly saying on the other hand that they know what Anti-Social Behaviour to be and its causes.

If as the case may be young people lack, for example, essential skills, or opportunities, or the resources to fully participate in society then it is likely they will feel excluded and it's then that the risk of engaging in Anti-Social Behaviour is increased.

In order to understand the significance of this I wish to refer to the Typology of Anti-Social Behaviour. From the list of Anti-Social Behaviour that pupils identified I was able to list activities in three out of four headings. Significantly though, no behaviour as listed by young people fell under Acts directed at people. This is compelling in that research carried out by NIACRO in 2001 revealed that the greatest concern expressed by residents was anti-social behaviour by young people (75.2%) including unsupervised children and young people hanging around street corners (71.6%). Research was carried out among residents, i.e., adult population living in the Galliagh and Shantallow areas.

Clearly adults certainly look upon the behaviour of young people as threatening and intimidating and more importantly viewed as directed towards them. Are we therefore to assume that young people do not view their behaviour in this way? Perhaps some insight into this question can be drawn from research carried out by Off the Streets in 2004 when it concluded that young people viewed main activities as being 'lower level' therefore suggesting that they did not see behaviours in the same vein as adults.

Further research in 2005 would seem to support this when Off the Streets found that:

> There are a number of key points emanating from this research not least of all the difference between how young people and adults view Anti-Social Behaviour and crime…..it seems that young people are clearly distinguishing what they view as important and in a sense re-classifying what would be seen as unacceptable behaviour.

Whilst this might be the case it does not answer the more significant question as to why according to the behaviours listed by pupils in this study none fall under 'Acts directed at people.' Is it merely coincidental that pupils failed to list any activities under this heading or can we be confident that there is a link with previous research suggesting that young people do not view activities in the same way as adults?

Evidence has clearly demonstrated that young people are more likely to be a victim of anti-social behaviour than adults (Evans, 2002). Research conducted by Off the Streets in 2004 underlined this:

> It is worth noting that young people, who are often accused of harassing adults and contribute to their sense of fear, do not really feel safe in the area themselves particularly at night-time or without any friends.

In fact young people as a constituent group in Northern Ireland have been affected by the Troubles more so than any other group therefore any suggestion that pupils failed to list activities under Acts directed against people as merely coincidental is surely unfounded. No other group would be more familiar with the various behaviours listed than young people. Perhaps young people have become so accustomed to various behaviours listed that the omission can be attributed to this. Irrespective of the reason for it and only further research would uncover why, it's clear that there is certainly a difference in how young people and adults both perceive particular behaviours.

Is this however the key to addressing Anti-Social Behaviour in the Greater Shantallow Area? If we provide the means by which both adults and young people can explore these behaviours

together is there grounds for believing that we can begin to address Anti-Social Behaviour? Before we can answer that question we must first of all consider the Greater Shantallow Area.

The population of the Greater Shantallow area is around 43,000 (40% of the population of Derry). Since 1971 the population of the Greater Shantallow Area has risen by over two-thirds. It has a very high proportion of young people with 43% of the population under the age of 17 and almost 60% of households under the age of 25. It is an area composed of 5 electoral wards, 3 of which are in the top 10% Multiple Deprivation Indices as determined by Noble.

Ten years ago the Greater Shantallow Area Partnership (GSAP) was set up to represent the concerns and interests of a multitude of groups across the Greater Shantallow Area and early on in it's existence recognised the importance of addressing Anti-Social Behaviour or as they called it Anti-Community Behaviour (2001).

> Anti-Community Behaviour and the question of how to reduce criminality in the Community are increasing concerns and a problem to address within many localities....much of the work involves young people.

Here there is recognition of two things: young people are involved in Anti-Social Behaviour but ultimately they are central to it being addressed. The importance of involving young people in any approach cannot be underestimated. But the question remains as to how it can be effectively tackled. The key points arising from this study offer some insight as to how we might develop such an approach. They are as follows:

- alcohol should no longer be seen as a form of escapism but rather for many serves to provide a means of social connection with friends and peers – reasons for drinking include boredom, peer pressure, excitement and an increase in confidence

- the relationship between young people and adults needs to be addressed in an effort to increase understanding and tolerance

- pupils views of the media were negative and must also be addressed if the perception of young people is to be improved

- pupils had much to say about the school environment making numerous suggestions and recommendations – perhaps a means to channel these thoughts might be developed

- relationships between young people and parents are stronger than one might expect and therefore this should receive due recognition

On the face of this there is nothing unusual in what is being said and to a large extent is as much about common sense as anything. However, what is interesting is that the common denominator in all of this seems to be young people's relationship to/with others, i.e., peers/friends, family, school, the wider community and society in general.

For the most part, society tends to look upon young people and judge them on their outward behaviour. The adult world sees young people as belonging to the community rather than the community belonging to young people. We tend to approach young people from the perspective of conformity therefore taking the initiative from them rather than handing them the responsibility of ensuring that they maintain the relationships with these group.

This may go some way to explaining why none of the pupils selected any of the behaviours that would fall into the Acts directed against people category. If (as findings would seem to suggest) relationships outside of young people's immediate circle, i.e., friends/peers and family are negative it's conceivable that they look upon these without any concern and therefore have no interest in making connections necessary to build relationships.

CONCLUSION

Anti-Social Behaviour is the greatest single issue facing communities in the Greater Shantallow Area. It exists within a context where existing tensions between numbers of interlinked factors make it difficult to develop a coherent strategy that effectively addresses the issue. These tensions include demands for quick fix solutions versus long-term strategies, prevention versus cure, fact versus fiction, righteousness versus tolerance, idealism versus realism. These tensions are exacerbated by the political vacuum, which without resolution only serves to encourage the continued existence of paramilitaries and non-resolution of the policing issue.

Young People in the Greater Shantallow Area have much to say on the subject of Anti-Social Behaviour. They have distinctive opinions, which are clearly at odds with the views of the adult population. They have a clear sense of what they understand Anti-Social Behaviour to be yet do not consider in many cases it serious enough to merit the attention it receives.

This study has 'unmasked' a key finding in that behaviour that is normally considered as harassment or intimidation or defined as such by the Typology of Anti-Social Behaviour is not shared by young people. This combined with previous research carried out by Off the Streets in 2004 and 2005 where among proposals was the development of programmes geared towards raising awareness of consequences of behaviour (in order to have a positive impact on low-level nuisance behaviour) supports the contention that there is a clear difference in how behaviour is perceived and therefore demands urgent attention in order to secure an agreed and accepted understanding of ultimately what constitutes Anti-Social Behaviour.

Only through dialogue and discussion can the communities in Greater Shantallow Area work to resolve the issue. In order to achieve this I am suggesting a number of proposals:

- Facilitate a process of bringing young people and adults together to work towards agreeing definitions and behaviours that constitute anti-social

- Initiate programmes to raise awareness among young people of the consequences of their behaviour and the impact it has on the respective communities

- Carry out further research so as to understand better the disparity in beliefs between young people and adults about Anti-Social Behaviour

- Focus on building inter-generational relationships through a programme of activities

- Examine peer pressure, its impact and how this can be used for positive means

- Develop and implement Training programmes for both adults and young people so that they can learn how to manage their relationships and minimise the potential for conflict

- Carry out follow-up research with pupils at St. Brigid's College in an effort to assess the findings in this study

- Development of programmes and projects that increase notions of responsibility and accountability among young people

- Information programmes for adults that increase awareness of needs of young people and pressures growing up in modern society

Appendix 1

The Greater Shantallow Area

The population of the Greater Shantallow area is around 43,000 (40% of the population of Derry). Peripheral to the main Greater Shantallow area, a network of strategic roads dissects this community whilst a lack of on-estate facilities and low car ownership increases the sense of isolation. Physically the area is too open and lacks definition. Since 1971 the population of the Greater Shantallow Area has risen by over two-thirds. It has a very high proportion of young people with 43% of the population under the age of 17 and almost 60% of households under the age of 25. According to NISRA, statistics available for the 1999/2000 period showed that the Greater Shantallow area has a population of 7613 under the age of 18 of which 3560 are aged between 10 and 17.

The average household size is 6, well above the average sizes for both the DCC area (3.4) and Northern Ireland (2.9). In fact 74% of 2,053 local households (Galliagh) contain 6 or more persons compared with a NI average of just 26%. The Shantallow area is composed of 5 electoral wards, Shantallow East, Shantallow West, Carnhill, Culmore and Pennyburn. Shantallow West, East and Carnhill are in the top 10% Multiple Deprivation Indicies as determined by Robson. Shantallow East and West is also in the top 3% of electoral wards for Income Deprivation whilst Carnhill was in the top 8%. All three figured in the top 6% for education deprivation and again top 8% for health deprivation. Shantallow East was first for Child Poverty deprivation. Indicators of need for these wards also showed there were 2386 lone parents on welfare benefits whilst upwards of 5000 dependants in receipt of Welfare Benefits and Family Credit. Eighty-seven per-cent of tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit.

The area is also particularly deprived and impoverished in terms of employment opportunities displaying high levels of sustained long-term unemployment both in comparison with the Derry City Council area and the wider Northern Ireland community with figures for long-term unemployed put at 55.59%. The combined effects of long-term unemployment, poverty and the impact of 30 years of political conflict have all had a detrimental effect on the social, economic and physical fabric of the area.

Shantallow West (Galliagh)

Off the Streets itself is located in Shantallow West, i.e., Galliagh, an area with an estimated population of 10,000. In 2001 a Community Safety Audit carried out in the Galliagh area revealed that the greatest concerns expressed among residents were anti-social behaviour by young people (75.2%); this included unsupervised children, young people hanging around street corners (71.6%), underage drinking (68.7%), verbal abuse from young people, litter, vandalism (56.2%), noise, quads and roaming dogs, use of drugs, alcohol abuse, threatening or actual assault, break-ins, joyriding (60.9%), graffiti (51.6%).

There were many pessimistic perceptions listed. Negative aspects of the neighbourhood included: drug and solvent abuse, speeding traffic, underage drinking, vandalism, graffiti and `joyriding`. Stray dogs, dog fouling, litter, noisy motorbikes and quads, bullying and unruly, unsupervised children were also highlighted.

Similarly to the Community Safety Audit, Derry Healthy Cities identified anti-social behaviour as a major element contributing to poor health. Many of the factors included underage drinking (81%), vandalism (67%) drug use (74%) and speed traffic (82%). However, data shows that there were great concerns regarding all issues, including bullying and harassment (63%), solvent misuse (62%) and child safety (69%). Detailed analyses of these ratings are presented in Table: 32. Four out of ten respondents reported being affected

by crime (42%) in their area again. Like the Audit, residents indicated the lack of facilities and activities for young people.

The report goes on to say, *"Services and programmes should reflect the need for the provision of a safe and comfortable environment facilitating innovative and creative ways of enabling young people to develop their potential as effective citizens within the community."*

A most recent phenomena not restricted solely to Galliagh but has become apparent in many areas across Northern Ireland is the level of abuse and attacks aimed at the emergency services. Between September '99 and November 2000 there were a total of 360 call outs for fire service. This included 35 malicious false alarms and to deal with 57 car fires. Often when the fire services are called out they are attacked by young people throwing stones, attempting to damage equipment and occasionally attacking fire fighters and most recently ambulance crews.

For many residents there is a great sense of pride in their community built up over many years but in recent times this has been tested immensely, so much so in fact, that at the time of the Community Safety Audit, 9.7% of residents had asked for a transfer or their tenancy was terminated. It's generally accepted within the Shantallow area that boredom and the lack of facilities for young people is a contributing factor to much of the anti-social behaviour within the area and most particularly in the immediate Galliagh area. This is backed up in the Community Safety Audit when over 90% of those surveyed said that services for children and young people were inadequate. There is also a perception among young people that the range of youth services currently available are not attractive and are inclined to reinforce the sense of alienation that young people feel by imposing too many rules and regulations.

Appendix 2

Misuse of Public Space	Disregard for community/personal well-being	Acts directed at people	Environmental Damage
Drugs/substance misuse & dealing • Taking Drugs **Street Drinking** • Drinking Alcohol	**Rowdy behaviour** • Fighting	**Intimidation/Harassment**	• **Criminal Damage** Graffiti • Theft (& 'selling them on') • Breaking into houses
Vehicle related nuisance & Inappropriate vehicle use • Joyriding • Driving around on quads and motorbikes	**Nuisance Behaviour** • Setting off fireworks • Throwing stones		
<u>**Others**</u> Begging Prostitution Kerb Crawling Sexual Acts	<u>**Others**</u> Noise Hoax Calls Animal Related Problems		<u>**Others**</u> Litter/Rubbish

All listed actions from the Audits and Strategies Toolkit has not been listed. The table only includes full behaviour headings in bold and details only those actions as listed by pupils (in light text).   So for example, under Prostitution, the full list would normally include soliciting, cards in phone boxes and discarded condoms

Appendix 3

Heading	Date
"999 thugs shaming Galliagh"	4th October 2005
"12 year olds are smoking dope"	10th October 2005
We'll help Galliagh beat joyriders	17th October 2005
Glue gang blamed for Galliagh attack	17th October 2005
Two juveniles released after Galliagh attacks	18th October 2005
War of words over Galliagh violence	20th October 2005

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