

New Deal for Communities

The National Evaluation

Research Reports

Effectiveness of a Dispersal Order to Reduce ASB amongst Young People: A Case Study Approach in East Manchester

Research Report 48

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently sponsoring the 2002-2005 national evaluation of New Deal for Communities. This evaluation is being undertaken by a consortium of organisations co-ordinated by the Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research at Sheffield Hallam University. The views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect those of the NRU/ODPM.

Those wishing to know more about the evaluation should consult the evaluation's web site in the first instance <http://ndcevaluation.adc.shu.ac.uk/ndcevaluation/h>



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**Effectiveness of a Dispersal Order to
Reduce ASB amongst Young People: A
Case Study Approach in East Manchester**

Research Report 48

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Executive Summary

Antisocial behaviour (ASB), particularly amongst young people is a significant problem throughout the country. It is problematic in large metropolitan areas and deprived neighbourhoods. The problem is recognised in the majority of New Deal for Communities (NDC) areas.

The NDC average in the MORI survey of 2004 found that **39% of residents see teenagers hanging around on the street as a serious problem in their area** and many of the NDCs identified youth ASB, youth disturbance, juvenile nuisance or youths causing annoyance as severe problems in delivery plans. ¹The NDC National Evaluation Research Report 17 illustrates that devising effective interventions to deal with the problem of ASB has become a major priority for NDC practitioners. Many identified developing strategies to tackle youth nuisance as a key priority. **Over half of the NDCs stated that problems caused by young people were linked to ASB. Respondents identified large groups of people hanging out in public areas and behaving in an intimidating and harassing manner as a cause for concern.**

The Antisocial Behaviour Act led to the emergence of amongst others, the **Dispersal Order (DO)**. The implementation of a Dispersal Order in the East Manchester NDC area is described for the purposes of this report. As the order only came into force nationally in January 2004, there are no means of comparing any preliminary results from the NDC area with any other national or local evaluation.

Part four, Section 30-36 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 gives the police, working jointly with local authorities, **new powers to designate an area where they can disperse groups if delegated officers have reasonable grounds for believing that their presence or behaviour has resulted, or is likely to result in a member of the public being harassed, intimidated, alarmed or distressed. Young people under the age of 16 found to be unsupervised on the streets in the designated area between the hours of 9pm and 6am can be taken to their place of residence by the police.**

Aims of the Research

The DO was implemented in the NDC area for a period of three months, September 2004 until January 2005. East Manchester NDC worked in partnership with the local police to implement and enforce the Order. This report's aims are as follows:

- To provide an overview of the processes involved in implementing a DO.
- To provide analyses of resident's attitudes towards the Order and perceptions of effectiveness.
- To illustrate NDC practitioners' and police officers' experiences of implementing and enforcing the DO.
- To provide young people's views about and experience of the Order.

Due to time constraints, the report does not provide a definitive evaluation of the effectiveness of the DO.

¹ Blandy, S., Hunter, C. and Nixon, J. (2003) *Private Sector Landlords and Anti-Social Behaviour - Research Report 17*. Sheffield, CRESR.

Methods

A range of methods were utilised to undertake the research:

- Interviews were undertaken with the Community Safety Manager and the Youth Intervention Officer at East Manchester NDC.
- Five depth interviews and two focus groups were undertaken with young people in the area. A total of 23 young people were involved.
- The researcher, who accompanied police officers and NDC staff patrolling the NDC area, undertook observations of enforcing the order.
- Observation of four dispersal order panels used by GMP officers to speak with parents whose children were not adhering to the order.
- Analysis of police data on juvenile nuisance from 2001 to 2004.
- A survey was distributed around NDC residents. (The survey was sent to 250 households selected by NDC practitioners as households which had signed an initial survey responding that they were in favour of a DO being implemented in the area). Over a three month period approximately 60 of the 250 surveys were completed.²

Analyses of findings from the above methods demonstrate the following:

- Implementing and Enforcing the Order.
- 277 young people were stopped by the police.
- 177 young people were dispersed by the police.
- 96 young people were escorted home by the police.
- 3 arrests were made for breaching the DO.

Impact of the Order:

- Calls made to the police regarding youth nuisance rose during the three-month period that the dispersal order was in place. This could be viewed as a positive outcome of the Order as residents are encouraged and feel more inclined to report youth nuisance to the police.

Responses from Residents

- 49% of residents surveyed responded that they had not heard of the Order.
- Residents who responded that they had heard of the Order and then commented on its effectiveness (14%), stated that young people did not take any notice of it

Responses from Young People

- Young people responded that the DO was unfair, particularly the 9pm curfew.
- Young people stated that there was little consistency with the way in which different officers policed the Order.
- Young people felt that it made their behaviour worse as they became antagonistic toward police officers for implementing the Order.
- Young people criticised the fact that they could not be in groups of two or more as it conflicted the usual advice they are given about safety.
- Young people stated that they hung around on the streets because there was nothing else to do in the area.

² This is a 25% completion rate which is comparable to other surveys of this nature.

The following explanations are provided for the above findings:

- Calls made during the period of the DO could have risen as residents were more likely to call the police regarding youth nuisance because they were aware that the Order had been implemented. Consequently, they knew that the police had the powers to be able to tackle it. Expectations could be higher, whilst at the same time reducing their tolerance towards youth nuisance. It could also have been a seasonal fluctuation as previous figures had demonstrated a 'seasonal spike' during these months.
- The DO was only implemented for a period of three months. Large-scale operations such as this can take time to 'bed in'. Inevitably the publicity/promotional aspect can also take time to be recognised.
- NDC practitioners did recognise that the DO needs to be policed consistently. This could address a number of issues including: young people adhering to the curfew, young people being dispersed sensibly and limiting the chances of increasing resentment amongst young people toward the police.
- NDC practitioners refuted the young people's claims that there is little youth provision in the area. They responded that NDC had introduced a number of projects/initiatives. It was recognised that they needed to be marketed more effectively.

1. Introduction

Antisocial behaviour, particularly amongst young people is a significant problem throughout the country. Research evidence suggests that it is problematic in large metropolitan areas and deprived neighbourhoods. The problem is recognised in the majority of New Deal for Communities (NDC) areas.

This report will consider the extent and differential experience of ASB. The main focus of the report is on the implementation of a Dispersal Order in the East Manchester NDC area as a method of reducing ASB by young people. It will discuss the effectiveness of the order and provide views from young people, practitioners and residents. It will identify recommendations and provide a checklist for other NDC areas considering implementing a Dispersal Order to tackle ASB amongst young people.

2. Methodology

The Dispersal Order implemented in the NDC case study area is a national piece of legislation introduced by the ASB Act 2003. As the order only came into force nationally in January 2004, there are no means of comparing any preliminary results from the NDC area with any other national or local evaluation. The report makes use of a case study approach with the:

- Beswick and Openshaw Partnership (East Manchester)

Greater Manchester Police were able to provide data on the number of calls made by residents to the police regarding juvenile nuisance from 2001 to 2004. This data was provided for the area in which the DO was implemented. It includes the time period of the order: September 2004 to January 2005. Due to time constraints, it has not been possible to study follow-up data regarding juvenile nuisance after the order ended in January 2005. Data has also been gathered through interviews with young people in the NDC area and NDC practitioners. Approximately 60 residents completed a survey relating to the effectiveness of the dispersal order. Although formal one-to-one depth interviews were not undertaken with police officers due to their work commitments, the researcher did spend a considerable amount of time with officers involved in policing the Order. The researcher, accompanied police officers and NDC staff patrolling the NDC area and undertook observations of them enforcing the order. Data regarding calls made about juvenile nuisance was provided by and analysed with the area sergeant. Discussion did take place with these officers with reference to their views and experience of the DO.

3. The Policy Context

3.1. Defining the Problem

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defines ASB as acting "*in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household (as the defendant) (CDA 1998, Section 1, (1) a)*".

Tackling the causes and effects of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) particularly by young people is high on the political agenda. The Antisocial Behaviour Unit was established by the Home Office in January 2003 with a remit to co-ordinate and develop a new approach to tackling ASB, whilst the Antisocial Behaviour Act was passed through parliament in 2003. It has led to the emergence of amongst others, the Dispersal Order, Parenting Orders and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).

Whilst ASB provides a focus for much government legislation there is a lack of clarity as to what constitutes such behaviour. ASB can mean different things to different people. As a means of clarification, antisocial behaviours were broken down into thirteen main categories by the Home Office for the purpose of the ASB one day count (September 10th 2003).

The following behaviours were identified:

Box 1: Thirteen Categories of ASB - Home Office One Day Count

- drug/substance misuse and dealing
- street Drinking; Begging
- prostitution; Kerb crawling; Sexual acts
- abandoned cars
- vehicle related nuisance and inappropriate vehicle use
- noise
- rowdy behaviour
- nuisance behaviour
- hoax calls
- animal - related problems
- intimidation/harassment
- criminal damage/vandalism
- litter/rubbish

3.2. The Extent of the Problem

There are a number of surveys including the British Crime Survey (BCS) which demonstrate that ASB is a common problem. The British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA) shows that two in five respondents routinely experienced problems with teenagers congregating in public spaces and problems with rubbish/litter.

The BCS 2002/03 (Simmons, 2003) found that one third of respondents perceived the following to be 'very' or 'fairly' big problems: vandalism, graffiti (35%); teenagers hanging around on the streets (33%); rubbish or litter (33%) and people using or dealing drugs (32%). Smaller numbers of respondents reported noisy neighbours or loud parties (10%) as being a very/fairly big problem.

3.3. Differential Experience

As Whitehead, Stockdale and Razzu (2003) note, ASB is not experienced uniformly across the country or equally by everyone. Evidence from the SEU (2000) suggests that ASB is particularly problematic in large metropolitan areas and deprived neighbourhoods - invariably urban and inner city areas.

The NDC average in the MORI survey of 2004 found that 39% of residents see teenagers hanging around on the street as a serious problem in their area and many of the NDCs identified youth ASB, youth disturbance, juvenile nuisance or youths causing annoyance as severe problems in delivery plans.

The MORI survey (2003) illustrated that in the past twelve months more than one in five NDC residents (22%) had experienced damage to their property (14% incidence), intimidation (9% incidence) or racial abuse (4%) incidence. It also showed that those aged 65 or over were less likely to consider ASB as a problem. Whilst 16-24 year olds in NDC

areas are most likely to be concerned about vandalism and graffiti. The younger age groups are more likely to be victims.

3.4. Links between disorder, crime and concern about crime

Some commentators argue that ASB can lead to the onset of more serious criminal involvement. Skogan (1990) has defined this as 'contagion theory'. Wilson and Kelling (1982) refer to it as the 'broken windows effect'. These theories would suggest that the presence of vandalism or criminal damage such as 'broken windows' leads directly to more ASB.

Whilst anti-social behaviours do not always warrant a criminal label the terms crime/offending and ASB are used interchangeably, which could explain the association between ASB and fear of crime. The 2000 BCS findings confirmed that there is an association between disorder and crime in England and Wales in that respondents classified as perceiving high levels of disorder in their area were more likely to have been victims of crime in the previous year (48%), than those perceiving medium or levels of disorder (36% and 24% respectively) (Budd and Sims (2001). This suggests that victimization occurs in areas with high levels of disorder.

3.5. ASB amongst Young People

Box 2: The 2003 Crime and Justice Survey (C&JS) Hayward and Sharp (2005)

Found that:

- 29% of young people said they had committed at least one act of antisocial behaviour in the previous year
- the most common antisocial behaviour was causing a public disturbance (15%), followed by causing 'neighbour complaints' (13%). More serious incidents such as joyriding and carrying a weapon were much less common
- of those responsible for antisocial behaviour, the majority (68%) only committed one type of behaviour. Only 9% (2.4% of the sample) committed three or more different types
- males reported higher levels of antisocial behaviour across all types of behaviour. A third of males admitted at least one behaviour, compared with a fifth of females
- 14-16 year olds were more likely to commit antisocial behaviour than other age groups. Two fifths of them reported at least one act of antisocial behaviour in the last twelve months
- the following factors were strongly associated with antisocial behaviour: disruptive school environment; delinquent peers; drug use; risky alcohol use; negative relationship with parents; 'delinquent' personality traits; living in a household in financial difficulties; living in a high disorder area; and being a victim of crime
- about 17% of young people had committed antisocial behaviour but no more serious offence. 12% of young people had committed both antisocial behaviour and offences. 9% had committed offences, but no antisocial behaviour

4. ASB in NDC Areas

³Results from a telephone survey of 32 NDC areas classified ASB into four main headings:

- misuse of public space
- disregard for community/personal well being
- acts directed at people
- environmental damage

Three themes cut across the categories:

- youth nuisance and associated problems
- high levels of crime and fear of crime
- harassment of black and minority ethnic groups

The same report illustrates that devising effective interventions to deal with the problem of ASB has become a major priority for NDC practitioners. Many identified developing strategies to tackle youth nuisance as a key priority. The study indicated that only one of the respondents in the telephone survey stated that youth nuisance was not a problem. Over half of the NDCs stated that problems caused by young people were linked to ASB. Respondents identified large groups of people hanging out in public areas and behaving in an intimidating and harassing manner as a cause for concern.

As the DO provides new powers to disperse groups behaving antisocially it is a powerful tool for NDC Partnerships to adopt as a strategy to tackle this behaviour amongst young people. Within the context of East Manchester, the DO was not used in conjunction with other youth activities, such as youth diversion. It would be desirable to integrate it into part of a cohesive strategy with which to tackle ASB.

5. The Dispersal Order

Part four, Section 30-36 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 gives the police, working jointly with local authorities, **new powers to designate an area where they can disperse groups if delegated officers have reasonable grounds for believing that their presence or behaviour has resulted, or is likely to result in a member of the public being harassed, intimidated, alarmed or distressed.**

In a Dispersal Order area, **the police can direct individuals congregating in groups of two or more to leave the area and exclude them from said area for a period of up to 24 hours. If an individual is dispersed and returns to the area within 24 hours, the order has effectively been breached and can lead to arrest. Young people under the age of 16 found to be unsupervised on the streets in the designated area between the hours of 9pm and 6am can be taken to their place of residence by the police unless there is reasonable grounds for believing that the young person would, if taken to that place, be likely to suffer significant harm. Dispersal Orders can only be introduced in areas where it can be demonstrated that ASB is a persistent problem.**

³ Blandy, S., Hunter, C. and Nixon, J. (2003) Private Sector Landlords and Anti-Social Behaviour - Research Report 17. Sheffield, CRESR.

5.1. East Manchester's Experience - Why Implement a Dispersal Order?

The Beswick and Openshaw Partnership delivery plan stated that ASB and neighbour nuisance were major concerns for residents in the area. Teenagers and young people were felt by 77% to be the main cause of problems. Three years later residents again cited young people as a dominant problem in the area. **Youth nuisance was second only to crime in a list of resident priorities in the Beacon's 2002 resident's survey.** In the 2004 MORI Survey 45% of residents responded that teenagers hanging around on the streets was a serious problem in the area.

Table 1: 2004 MORI Survey Findings of Residents Responses as to whether or not Young People Hanging around on the Streets is a Problem in the Area

	Response %
A serious problem in this area	45
A problem in this area, but not serious	28
Not a problem in this area	27
Don't know	1

When asked why they felt it necessary to implement a DO in the area, NDC practitioners responded that:

"Young people on these estates have had a free rein in terms of been able to do what they want when they want and cause distress to good residents, good people. I think slowly but surely now these young people are being reigned in and measures like this give a certain amount of safety to people who respect the law and want to be part of the community." (NDC Practitioner)

"Mainly because of relatively high levels of youth nuisance in the Openshaw area reported to the police. We now have Local Action Partnerships and at first for residents it was all about more serious crime but this changed as the area began to change and now it is far more about quality of life issues and youth nuisance." (NDC Practitioner)

Figures provided by Greater Manchester Police (GMP) demonstrate that between April 2002 - March 2003 and April 2003 - March 2004 there was a significant increase in the reporting of youth nuisance related incidents in the Openshaw area.

Table 2: Number of Calls made to Police regarding Youth Nuisance from April 2002-March 2003 and April 2003 - March 2004.

AREA	2002/2003	2003/2004	% Change	Number of victims
Openshaw	628	725	+15	+97

It must be acknowledged that resident's increase willingness to report youth nuisance could account for some of the increase in calls.

Incident summaries from December 2003 and December 2004, provided by GMP, with regard to youth nuisance included the following examples:

"In the evenings at around 7-9pm usually a group of up to 15, aged between 13-15 yrs. They are drinking, Sitting on people doorsteps, and generally causing a nuisance."

"Throwing stones 2 youths in dark clothing. Currently throwing stones at the side of No. 72."

"Trouble with youths on motor scooter - Have been riding round caller's front garden - now on allotments at back of premises."

The Dispersal Order was introduced in the Higher Openshaw area of NDC on 20th September 2004 for a period of three months ending on January 10th 2005. Presently, Orders can be granted for a maximum of six months.

5.2. The process involved in obtaining the Order

The decision to implement the DO was driven by the Community Safety Manager from the NDC Partnership. It was presented to the local area police and the city council as a means to tackle ASB amongst young people in the NDC area. The following quote from the Community Safety Manager illustrates part of the process:

"Once we knew it was there it was just a case of getting the area police team involved. It's up to them to police it and if they don't want to then its not going to happen. They didn't take much convincing." (NDC Practitioner)

The local area police team then had to write a report stating the case for requiring the Order. This included figures for calls made by residents in relation to youth nuisance for the period 2002/2003 and 2003/2004. They were also able to attach **approximately 500 signatures from residents in support of the DO**. Canvassing opinion from local residents was driven by the NDC team. The NDC Community Safety Manager along with his staff, police officers and local councillors 'door stepped' 500 NDC residences over a two day period to gain support for the DO.

Legislation does not stipulate that this needs to be undertaken. It only stipulates that once a DO is obtained it must be advertised in the local press to ensure that residents are aware of the conditions of the order prior to its inception. The following quote from the NDC Community Safety Manager explains why they sought to canvass local opinions:

"We didn't have to collect the signatures but we thought we should in terms of community capacity building it was worthwhile doing. We thought in terms of explaining it to residents, we know they don't always read the local press, word of mouth is the main way." (NDC Practitioner)

5.3. Policing the Order

Methods used and resources provided to police to enforce a DO can vary from area to area provided that the legislation in the ASB Act is adhered to.

Extra resources to implement the DO effectively and efficiently were provided by GMP through Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. Resources provided included, **financing transport to police the curfew for under 16's**. A suitable vehicle was provided - invariably a liveried police van with a secure area at the rear which made it possible to transport young people home who were in breach of the order. **Two police officers worked between 7pm and 1am, 7 days per week** patrolling the designated area and enforcing the Order.

In an interim report written by the area's police sergeant, reference is made to the fact that on occasions, liveried vehicles were not available for use and unmarked vehicles had to be used. Also, on a number of occasions the area could not provide officers to police the DO due to other commitments/initiatives in the area.

In addition to police officers, the NDC's **Youth Intervention Officer (YIO)** also played an integral role in the implementation and policing of the Order. The NDC have funded the

YIO for a period of three years since October 2003. **The role was created to deal with low level antisocial behaviour within the NDC area.** The YIO works in partnership with GMP and other agencies in the area dealing with young people. It has created a culture of information sharing between the local police area and NDC. The role of the YIO in relation to the DO was on occasion to accompany police officers when patrolling the area. It was felt that the YIO's knowledge of young people in the area could assist officers in dealing with young people appropriately and also to identify those who had multiple needs and needed to be referred to relevant agencies. For monitoring purposes, the YIO created a database of the names of all young people spoken with, dispersed, taken home or arrested.

The YIO along with the police, neighbourhood nuisance team and local YOT was involved with the setting up and running of dispersal order panels. This involved offering information and guidance to parents of young people who persistently breached the Order.

Box 3: Steps involved in policing and enforcing the Openshaw Dispersal Order

- two officers patrol designated area in police vehicle from 7pm onwards. If young people are on the streets they are reminded that the curfew commences at 9pm for those under the age of 16
- it is at the officer's discretion whether young people in groups of two or more are dispersed
- from 9pm onwards details can be taken of those young people still on the streets. Those under the age of 16 are told to go home. It is at the officer's discretion as to whether or not they accompany a young person home
- a young person who has been dispersed and has returned to the area within a 24 hour period can be arrested. This is at the discretion of the officer
- if a young person under the age of 16 continuously breaches the order i.e. does not adhere to the curfew, their parents are asked to attend a multi-agency dispersal panel to provide them with information and guidance about the DO

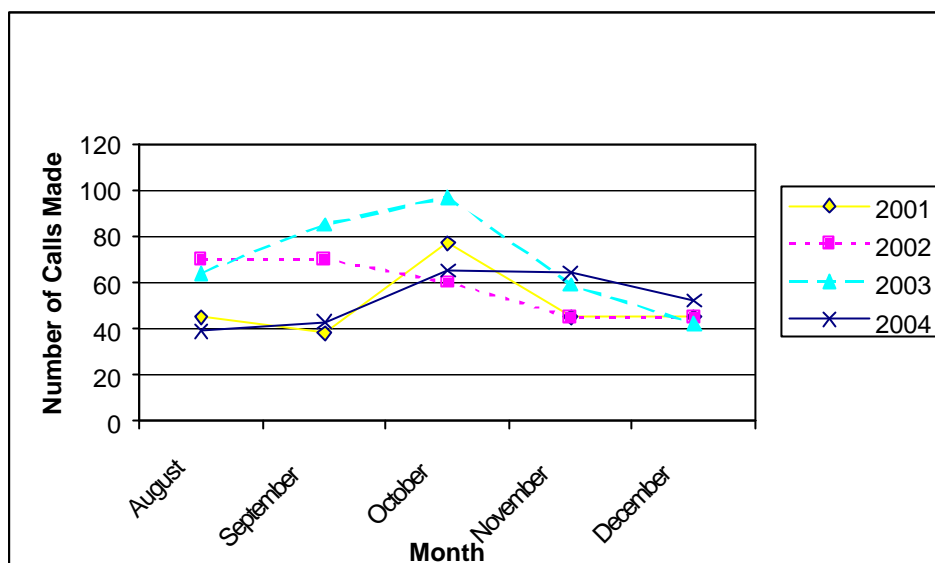
6. Effectiveness of the DO in Openshaw

Police figures, interviews with NDC practitioners and young people and a survey distributed to residents were analysed to ascertain the effectiveness of the DO. As the DO was only implemented for a period of three months **the results cannot provide a definitive evaluation of its impact.**

6.1. Police Figures for Calls made Regarding Youth Nuisance

Police figures provided for calls made by residents regarding juvenile nuisance in the Openshaw area were obtained for August to December 2001-2004.

Chart 1: Calls Made Regarding Juvenile Nuisance between August to December 2001-2004



The chart illustrates that calls fluctuated over the three year period, although 2003 did have exceptionally higher figures compared with other years. The chart also illustrates evidence of a “seasonal spike” occurring in the month of October, which police officers and NDC staff explain as a result of the misuse of fireworks around this time.

Table 3: Total number of Calls made from September to December 2001 - September to December 2004

Total Number of calls made	Sep-Dec 01	Sep-Dec 02	Sep-Dec 03	Sep-Dec 04
	202	220	284	224

Table three illustrates the total number of calls made regarding juvenile nuisance from September to December 2001 to September to December 2004. Breaking down the calls in this way enables comparisons to be made over a three year period focusing on the time period of the DO. Calls made in 2004 were the second highest over the comparable periods of 2001 to 2003. An explanation for this is provided below.

Comparing the full 12 month period January 2003 to January 2004, **figures for 2004 are lower throughout the year until November and December when there is an increased percentage change.**

The difficulty with comparing 2003/2004 figures is that **2003 saw an exceptionally higher numbers of calls being made compared with other years.** September and October 2003 had the highest number of calls over the three year period 2001-2004. **Three times as many calls were made in October 2003 compared with October 2004.** Figures for youth nuisance in 2003 are consistent with figures for domestic burglary, robbery and vehicle crime in the same year all of which were significantly higher in 2003 in the Openshaw area compared with figures for 2004.

Table 4: Number of Calls made regarding Youth Nuisance from January 2003 to January 2004

Number of calls made regarding youth nuisance	2003	2004	Percentage Change
January	39	48	+9
February	68	54	-14
March	59	40	-19
April	53	42	-11
May	59	42	-17
June	60	44	-16
July	64	36	-28
August	64	36	-28
September	85	43	-42
October	97	65	-32
November	59	64	+5
December	42	52	+10

The figures provided for August-December 2004 demonstrate that **prior to the Dispersal Order's inception, 2004 figures were amongst the lowest over the three year period. Conversely, figures for 2004 were highest whilst the Order was in place.** One explanation for this could be that residents were more likely to call the police regarding youth nuisance as they were aware that the Order had been implemented and therefore knew that the police had the powers to be able to tackle it. Residents' expectations could have been higher during the period of the Order, whilst at the same time reducing their tolerance towards youth nuisance. Therefore, an increase in calls could be viewed as a positive outcome as residents feel more inclined to report youth nuisance.

6.2. Resident Perceptions

Results from the survey completed by 63 residents demonstrated that ASB was perceived to be a problem in the area.

- 33% of residents responded that ASB was a very big problem in the area
- 19% stated that ASB was not a very big problem in the area
- 68% of residents responded that they thought young people were a nuisance in the area
- 48% responded that teenagers hanging around was a very big problem

When asked whether they heard of the Dispersal Order:

- 42% stated that they had
- 49% responded that they had not

(The remaining percentage did not answer the question)

Nearly half of all residents responded that they had not heard of the Order which could be a result of the relatively short period of time it was enforced. Large scale operations such as this can take time to 'bed in'. Inevitably the publicity/promotional aspect can also take time to be recognised. If the area was to apply for another dispersal order, efforts should be made to ensure that all residents are aware of what it is and the powers attached to it. It must also be noted that residents who have young people under the age of 16 living with them could be more aware of the Order as it is more likely to affect them. 71% of the respondents in this study did not have a young person living with them.

When asked about effectiveness:

- 14% of residents responded that they did not think the dispersal order had been effective in reducing youth nuisance
- 10% stated that it had

(The remaining percentage is missing, as from the residents who responded that they had heard of the Order, only 24% completed the question about effectiveness).

Of those residents who had heard about the DO and responded that they did not feel it had reduced youth nuisance:

- 15 responded that it was due to young people not taking any notice of it
- 10 responded that young people are not the only cause of ASB in the area
- 10 responded that the police did not enforce it strictly enough
- 9 responded that the consequences of breaching the Order were not severe enough
- 4 responded that it was unrealistic for parents to keep their children at home after 9pm

* *Some residents listed more than one reason*

Qualitative data regarding the effectiveness of the DO provided through the survey fell into four broad categories. They are as follows:

- (i) The Order had been effective.

Most kids take notice a few do not take any notice.

I have noticed a marked reduction in gangs of young people going around after midnight.

I think it has lessened the amount of gang fights.

- (ii) It had been ineffective because young people did not take any notice of it.

It does not reduce nowt because when they leave (the police) all the kids come back again playing football until 11.00

Not noticed any change in this area. Gangs disappear when authorities come round and re-group when they have gone.

- (iii) Young people should be left alone.

Children on the streets whether they are doing something or not. They are children and they shouldn't be made to go home if they are not doing anything wrong.

If kids are causing trouble then they should be taken home if not they should be left alone.

- (iv) It is the responsibility of parents to know what their children are doing.

Probably not as many teenagers hanging about but the younger children seem to be getting worse. I suspect it's because some parents don't know or care what their kids are up to.

...for all the bad things these kids do I don't think they get punished hard enough if they continue to cause nuisance then the parents should be heavily fined. Maybe this will wake the parents up and realize what their kids are doing while they are out.

Although only 42% of residents responded that they had heard of the DO, when asked if they would like to see the DO extended beyond January 2005, **69% stated that they would**. This could suggest that residents are keen to have interventions implemented in the area even if they are not entirely sure what their powers are. It creates an atmosphere in which it seems steps are being taken to eradicate problems.

It is acknowledged that a larger completion sample could have demonstrated different responses. It would also be valuable to carry out a follow-up survey once the Order had finished allowing for changes in time to be captured.

Qualitative evidence was provided by NDC practitioners with regard to the impact of the Order. They gave examples of residents stating in meetings that they felt the area had become quieter in the months the Order was implemented. NDC practitioners themselves stated that they believed the area was quieter. The following quotes provide examples of this evidence:

"It's had a massive impact on youth nuisance compared to this time last year. Openshaw was always the youth nuisance hot spot. It was always an area where there was large numbers of young people out on the streets and the difference physically seeing it out on the streets. The situation for Openshaw residents this year compared with last year is completely different." (NDC Practitioner)

"I used to tour the streets with the community beat officers and I've never seen Openshaw village as quiet as it has been on this operation." (NDC Practitioner)

6.3. The Impact of the Order

Figures provided by the NDC present the number of young people stopped, dispersed and arrested as a result of the inception of the DO.

Table 5: Number of Young People Stopped by the Police

Number of young people stopped	September 04	October 04	November 04	Dec 04/Jan 05	Total
	78	99	77	23	277

The way in which the DO was policed in Openshaw resulted in young people being stopped and spoken to by police officers without necessarily being dispersed or taken home. Through the researchers own observations and discussions with NDC staff, police officers would firstly warn young people that the curfew began at 9.00pm and would recommend that they returned home by that time. **The 277 young people stopped from September 04 to January 05** consequently may not have had any further contact with the police as part of the stipulations of the DO. Quotes from NDC practitioners explain how the Order was policed:

"The way it works at the moment there has been a bit of leeway with the officers policing this when the 9.00 curfew starts it's pretty unrealistic with the nature of the young people we work with that they are going to adhere to that. I'd say there would be a 30 min leeway. I think officers will generally give a 15 to 30 minute stay of execution where young people can make their way to the bus stops or be picked up or make their way home. After that what we've found is the people out after 9.30pm are the ones deliberately staying out. Whether they want to engage in a bit of fun of

games with the police or whether it's not been enforced by their parents." (NDC Practitioner)

"The good thing is that it has been policed sensibly so if kids haven't been causing a problem they've not necessarily been dispersed. Looking at the figures put together, 277 kids have been stopped, two thirds were dispersed. So it hasn't been a block it's been done sensibly as the situation warrants it." (NDC Practitioner)

177 young people were dispersed - actively told to split up from their friends if they were in a group of more than two and advised to return home by 9pm.

Table 6: Number of Young People Dispersed by the Police

Number of Young People Dispersed	September 04	October 04	November 04	Dec 04/Jan 05	Total
	62	63	42	10	177

The figures demonstrate that from November to January there was a decrease in the numbers of young people dispersed. This could be explained by young people becoming more aware of the restrictions of the DO and the methods used to police it, consequently adhering to it.

Of those young people aged under 16 who were seen on the streets after 9pm, **96 were escorted home**. Police officers take the young person into the house and explain to parents why they have escorted their child home.

Table 7: Number of Young People Escorted Home by the Police

Number of young People Escorted Home	September 04	October 04	November 04	Dec 04/Jan 05	Total
	15	34	34	13	96

Compared with numbers of young people stopped and dispersed, numbers for escorts home are significantly smaller. This could be due to the way in which it was policed with officers only taking young people home when they deemed it to be absolutely necessary. Alternatively, it could be due to young people adhering to the Order therefore eliminating the need for officers to escort them home.

A total of **three arrests** were made throughout the duration of the Order. Officers can use the power of arrest when a young person is dispersed and returns to the said area within 24 hours. The figures demonstrate that the power of arrest was used on a minimal number of occasions. As one NDC practitioner commented:

"It's not an order where the police officers are out with a huge stick and say you're under arrest. It's only extreme cases where continual breaches have led to young people being arrested. If you take it as a sample a very, very small sample have actually been arrested and taken to court and I would safely say the majority of those young people are already well known and involved in the CJS anyway." (NDC Practitioner)

6.4. Response from Young People

Interviews and focus groups with young people living in the Openshaw area were undertaken to establish young people's views and attitudes towards the implementation of the DO.

They were undertaken at the local Youth Offending Team (YOT) office, a youth inclusion project and a local secondary school. Apart from one, all the young people interviewed were male. They were aged between 14 and 17 years old.

All of the young people had had some experience of the dispersal order being enforced. The majority had experienced being spoken to by police officers and advised to disperse and return home by 9pm. A small number of approximately 7 had been escorted home and only one had been arrested which led to a court appearance.

All of the young people could explain in general terms the restrictions of the DO. There was some confusion about how it was breached i.e. returning to area within 24 hours and the consequences of breaching. When asked what they knew about the DO responses included:

“To stop a gang of youths making trouble.” (Young Person)

“To split gangs of youths up, if two or more.” (Young Person)

“If under age of 16 then you can be taken home, if over 16 can be arrested.” (Young Person)

When asked about their experiences of the enforcement of the DO all the young people interviewed spoke at length about what they perceived to be the unfairness of the Order and also the inconsistency of the way in which it was policed. The responses from young people contrast quite significantly with the responses given above from NDC practitioners.

The following quotes are representative of responses illustrating the perceived unfairness of the Order:

“They only go for the kids they don’t go after the adults. They think we’re easier. We’re easier to target aren’t we?” (Young Person)

“I’ve seen people driving around in cars and all that while we’ve been stood on the street; they go right past the cars and come after us.” (Young Person)

When asked what advice police officers would normally give when enforcing the DO the following quotes are representative of responses which highlight the inconsistencies in the way young people thought it was policed:

“They swear and call you names, they don’t say right lads could you go home that way and you go that way and if your seen in such area again you’ll be locked up.” (Young Person)

*“Sometimes you might get these nice police officers yeah, who just tell you to move away from the area cos people are asleep, but some knob heads they’ll tell you to f*** off home just get away from the area and if I see you in this area I’ll just lock you up.”* (Young Person)

“I’d respect the one when they say will you go home please.” (Young Person)

As the majority of young people interviewed were under 16 years old, the 9pm curfew was particularly relevant to them. It was an issue that produced a great deal of resentment when they were asked to give their views. All of the young people stated that they felt 9pm was too early for people of their age to have to be at home. The following quotes are illustrative:

"9.00pm what is that about? Little kids have got later bed times than that." (Young Person)

"They think they're your mum and dad or summat setting your own curfew up." (Young Person)

"9.00pm is well too early." (Young Person)

When asked what time they felt was respectable to have to be at home, the majority said between 10.00pm and 10.30pm during the week and they should be allowed to stay out as late as they wanted on weekends. When asked if their parents enforced the curfew many of them replied that they did not and that if they had been brought home by the police, their parents had been annoyed with the officer rather than the young person. Two young people responded:

"My mum says it's a waste of time. Paying a fine just for a dispersal order." (Young Person)

*"They're angry with the police, at first me mum was fine about it but then they started been t**ts you know arresting me for things all the time." (Young Person)*

When asked if the DO had changed the way in which they behaved whilst on the streets the majority responded that they did not take any notice of it. Interestingly, a number of them stated that it had made their behaviour worse because they felt it was unfair and as a result wanted to antagonise the police. The following quotes illustrate their views:

"It gets you in more trouble cos you want to get a chase off them." (Young Person)

"It made us worse because the police make you angry for making you go home at that time, so when you see em you just annoy them." (Young Person)

"So if they take you home you just go back out again and then you get caught again and you just get into even more trouble." (Young Person)

"You're not going to leave the area are you if the police tell you to. It's not their area it's ours innit?" (Young Person)

As one of the stipulations of the DO is that groups of two or more can be dispersed it was felt necessary to ascertain young people's views about this. Many of them responded that it conflicted with the advice they are given about safety. The following quotes illustrate their responses:

"They made us disperse cos we were in a group of more than three so they made one of us walk home by ourselves." (Young Person)

"One day they tell ya to hang about with more people so your not getting jumped or ought and then the next day they're saying you can't. It's just like saying your not allowed to have more than two friends." (Young Person)

"Nah, there's no way that's fair because you see on the news or TV after there's been a rape or murder all you see on the news yeah is if you're going out go with a friend never be on your own, that's one thing I don't understand. The police must want people to be murdered or raped." (Young Person)

When young people were asked why they spent so much time on the streets during evening times they all responded that there was nothing else for them to do in the Openshaw area.

"If they had more things for kids to do down here, we'd be doing summat." (Young Person)

"There's only Salvation army in Openshaw that's all and that is rubbish." (Young Person)

Two young people who were interviewed at a youth inclusion project responded that they attended the project most evenings but it was difficult to get there and they relied upon the project's staff for lifts there and back. Others bemoaned the fact that youth clubs shut between 8pm and 9pm and after they closed they had nothing else to do but hang about with their friends on the streets.

*"The youth clubs are sh**t and they shut at about 9.00pm."* (Young Person)

"We go to them until 9 and then we're on the streets." (Young Person)

When asked what would stop them hanging about on the streets and keep them occupied, a large number spoke about motorbike facilities.

"Motorbikes or have something open till 11.0pm or summat like that." (Young Person)

"Motor cross riding everybody would want to do that." (Young Person)

There was certainly evidence of young people stating that even if provision was provided they would still want to hang around on the streets particularly at weekends when they responded that all they wanted to do was go to the park to drink. It would seem there is a limit as to what NDC could provide to engage young people.

"Like on a Friday you're out wi your mates doing other stuff." (Young Person)

"We only drink on Fridays really that's what most kids do drink on a weekend." (Young Person)

"We just stand there, in a park or sumat like that smoke weed, sometimes we go out for chases or summat like that." (Young Person)

Interestingly, a large number of young people responded that they did not tend to hang about on the streets causing disturbances to residents; they preferred to go to local parks.

"We're not in public areas we're in like parks." (Young Person)

"We go in the parks and then they cordon it all off so then what can we do?" (Young Person)

"We don't hang around in front of people's houses." (Young Person)

The findings from interviews and focus groups are very important as they provide the perspective of the people that the DO will impact upon the most. Although NDC practitioners did canvass the opinion of residents nothing similar was carried out with young people in the area. Such a strategy could influence the way in which a DO is implemented and policed, as young people's views and attitudes are accounted for. Such

an approach could be carried out in local schools to ensure that large numbers of young people are involved.

6.5. NDC Practitioner Perspectives

NDC practitioners viewed the DO as a valuable safety mechanism for young people in the area as it reduced the number who could be out on the streets late in the evenings. They were of the opinion that residents had a tendency to exaggerate the negative aspects of the Order i.e. young people being dispersed and making their way home alone. They stated:

“As a safety issue it gets young people off the street at a reasonable time. It came into effect at the end of September when dark nights and safety issues come to the fore.” (NDC Practitioner)

“We attended a meeting right at the start of the dispersal process and we took questions from a number of residents who said, “you dispersed my daughter on her own last night she’s only 15 you sent off her in a opposite direction to her friends”. It’s just nonsense absolute nonsense, no police officer would ever send two 15 year old girls off in the opposite direction. I think sometimes people just want to create problems.” (NDC Practitioner)

They also spoke of the historical problem the area has with regard to both parents and young people complaining that there is a lack of youth provision.

“There is a dependency culture even in the NDC area parents and kids will still say there’s nothing for kids to do.” (NDC Practitioner)

“There’s lots of parks and football pitches there’s lots of sport provision there are several youth centres. It’s a two pronged problem I don’t think we’re good at marketing things on the youth side. On the other hand I just think it’s a get out for parents to say. It’s just so easy to say cos it’s like saying well it’s your problem not mine. It’s an ongoing problem in this area it always has been.” (NDC Practitioner)

6.6. The Police Perspective

Patrolling the area with police officers and working alongside the area sergeant analysing police figures, provided a number of opportunities to discuss their views about the DO.

It became apparent that the police viewed the implementation of the DO as an effective method of tackling young people’s involvement in ASB and improving the quality of life of NDC residents. One of their main concerns was that prior to the DO legislation they had no powers to intervene and tackle behaviour prior to it becoming a significant problem within an area. This extract taken from their application for the DO illustrates this point. *‘On occasions there has been frustration that despite knowing the youths involved, where they congregate and the type of problems they cause we have had to wait until the trouble starts before we can act.’* There was a general consensus amongst the officers spoken to that the DO would assist them in being able to identify persistent perpetrators and provide them with powers to intervene with these young people.

The extent to which the police viewed the DO as an effective tool for curtailing the behaviour of young people can be illustrated by their response to engaging with young people who persistently breached the Order. Dispersal Order Panels were set up by the police which involved letters being sent to the parents of young people who had been dispersed three times or more. Parents were requested to attend a panel meeting at the police station with their child to discuss why they did not adhere to the Order. The panel

consisted of the area sergeant, the NDC's YIO and the manager of the area's neighbour nuisance team. The researcher observed four panels. The police led the panels and questions were generally asked as to whether parents were aware of the Order and the powers attached to it. Two of the four parents were aware of the DO, whilst all the young people who attended knew that the DO had been implemented in the area. The police advised parents of the 9pm curfew and stressed that they should ensure that their child was in doors by that time. The police gave advice as to what could happen if their children did not adhere to the Order. This advice consisted of explaining that their child could be given an ABC, which could eventually lead to an ASBO and parents were also advised that they could lose their tenancies. It must be stressed that the police did not threaten parents with the above but merely advised that these measures could be taken if their child persistently ignored the DO.

When asked about their views of the 9pm curfew the officers were very pragmatic. They realised that it was part of the legislation that they had no control over and did acknowledge that it might seem too early for young people to be in indoors particularly in the Summer time, but they generally agreed that during the dark Winter months it was entirely acceptable.

Although officers spoken to were generally in favour of the Order, some concerns were raised about how they would be perceived by young people. During patrols, officers referred to themselves humorously as the 'child catchers'. Although this was a light hearted reference it was an issue that did concern them. Considering the responses from the young people about the way in which the Order was enforced it is something that needs to be addressed. (This is referred to in the following recommendations section).

7. Conclusion

As previously stated, these results cannot provide a definitive evaluation of the effectiveness of the dispersal order. Limited time constraints prevented a rigorous evaluation including follow-up data once the Order had ended. Future evaluations need to analyse effectiveness if the Order is implemented for a longer time period (for eg. 6 months) and if implemented at different times of the year (i.e. investigating any differences in seasonal spikes).

The findings have demonstrated very differing perspectives on the role and effectiveness of the DO. NDC practitioners and the police viewed the Order as providing the means to effectively tackle young people's involvement in ASB, whilst at the same time improving the quality of life of NDC residents. The most significant contrast to this is the view of the young people who felt that the Order was unfair as it restricted the number of friends they felt they could socialise with and placed restrictions on the time they could stay out on an evening. Young people stated that they 'hung around' on the streets mainly because there was nothing else for them to do in the area. NDC practitioners refuted this claim and listed a number of activities for young people in the area.

Regarding effectiveness, it has to be acknowledged that the DO was only implemented for a limited time period - three months. Analyses of resident's perceptions of effectiveness were limited due to a low response rate for questions regarding effectiveness. The findings from the survey do illustrate that efforts need to be made to publicise the implementation of a DO to ensure that residents are aware of its powers. Police figures for calls made by residents regarding juvenile nuisance did rise during the period the DO was implemented which could be a result of higher expectations amongst residents, whilst reducing their tolerance.

The study has provided an overview of the processes involved in obtaining an Order and the methods utilised to police it. It has also provided valuable insights of the views and opinions of residents, young people, NDC practitioners and the police. Ultimately, it has highlighted the need for more research to be undertaken focusing on the role and effectiveness of dispersal orders to enable 'best practice' to be developed.

7.1. Checklist for Tackling Young People's Involvement in ASB through the Implementation of a Dispersal Order

- NDC practitioners must be able to demonstrate that ASB is a significant problem in the area
- what is the perception of residents? Although not a stipulation it is advisable for community capacity building to canvass opinion prior to the Order being implemented. If this is carried out, how will it be measured?
- what figures or statistics are available to provide base line data with which to use for pre and post measures?
- working in Partnership with the local police
- local police area having the means to provide extra resources to police and enforce the Order
- the NDC Partnership having the means to provide extra resources to work with the police. For example, a Youth Intervention Officer

7.2. Recommendations

- ensure that all national guidelines are adhered to when implementing and policing the Order
- devise a method of canvassing young people's opinions about the Order prior to its inception. This could assist in alleviating some of the resentment toward the Order
- gathering residents perceptions prior to, during and after the Order has ended. This allows effectiveness to be measured
- ensuring that restrictions and powers of the Order are publicised to the wider community. In particular, young people and their parents
- devising a means of policing the cessation of the Order effectively. This will ensure that the Order does not end abruptly and that residents and young people are aware when it has ended
- using the information gathered from policing the Order to identify "high risk" and "high need" young people and their families and recommending appropriate referrals accordingly
- integrate the DO into part of a cohesive strategy with which to tackle ASB amongst young people in NDC areas
- undertaking long term evaluations
- policing the Order consistently. This could involve:
 - local police areas producing their own guidelines as to how they will police the Order
 - all officers working on the operation to be briefed about the guidelines
 - allocating a certain pool of officers to police the Order. In addition to ensuring consistency of policing methods it could also enhance trust and adherence amongst young people and parents

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