

20 Anti-social behaviour by groups of youths on the Cleveland Estate Bethnal Green E1

In March 2005 the Bethnal Green South Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) began a problem solving process to address the twin aims of reducing anti-social behaviour and fear of crime among residents on the Cleveland estate in east London. Initial problem solving work identified hotspot areas of the estate and individuals believed to be the most prolific perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. As the SNT worked with partners and interacted with the young people on the estate it became apparent that there were several underlying community cohesion issues that needed to be addressed. Levels of mistrust between young people and the elderly on the estate and between young people and the police were high. In response the SNT and their partners held a 'World Café' event, which brought the residents together and enabled them to bring issues of concern into the open. Following this event the SNT suggested a closer involvement with the young people. To demonstrate their commitment to improving their relationships with young people on the estate, the SNT suspended work on ASBOs and Acceptable Behaviour Contract applications. In January 2006 police and the young people took part in mediation sessions to progress the initiative. Oxford House, the local youth service provider, worked closely with the young people involved to support them to play a more active role in their community. A number of these young people began training in community development and a number went on to become peer youth workers. In 2006 the partnership commissioned a community film project to record and publicise the commitment of those living and working on the estate to work together to improve their environment. This innovative approach to tackling the causes of anti-social behaviour and improving community cohesion has been enormously successful: Between January 2005 and March 2007, recorded crime on the estate fell 49%. The proportion of residents who considered youth-related anti-social behaviour to be a serious problem fell from 100% in August 2005 to 36% in March 2006. Individuals who in 2005 had been identified as instigators of anti-social behaviour on the estate have undertaken training in community development and a number have become peer youth workers.