

82 Blackburn with Darwen Family Intervention Programme

Organisations in Blackburn with Darwen have experienced difficulties in dealing with nuisance families both in public sector and private housing. Its effect is often most damaging in communities that are already fragile and where services are overstretched. Anti-social behaviour can range from low level, for example dropping litter, to serious harassment. Typically the behaviour of perpetrators of anti-social behaviour has a disproportionate impact on large numbers of people.

The aim of the project is to challenge, support and resettle families to address the causes of their anti-social behaviour and to prevent tenancy breakdown. This enables families to fully participate in their community, to ensure that children and young people are able to live in their home and sustain a positive lifestyle without causing distress or annoyance to others resulting in an enhancement of the quality of life for communities.

Whilst challenging the anti-social behaviour of family members, the project must also identify the causes of the behaviour and work intensively with the family to address these and to ensure that the anti-social behaviour does not reoccur. Enforcement action alone has previously proven to displace the problem elsewhere within the Borough rather than dealing with the issues.

This is done by:

- Levering in mainstream services or directly delivering services where mainstream services are unavailable
- Improving the compliance of family members with the services they are engaged with through the setting up of tenancy support plans, monitoring and ensuring that the family are clear about the consequences of their behaviour
- Ensuring agencies involved with a family are sharing information about progress.

The project is funded to support up to twenty families at any one time. As some families have taken many years to develop entrenched behaviour, resolving it is not a 'quick fix'. The project is usually involved with the family for at least six months and sometimes up to two years. This time scale is to give the family the best possible chance of sustaining changes.

Blackburn with Darwen and NCH recognised that action to deal with anti-social behaviour requires agencies to address the many sources of dysfunction in families of which disruptive behaviour is just one manifestation. Previous processes used by agencies working in isolation often led to conflict between agencies as it often interrupted or ruined ongoing interventions aimed at helping the problem family, resulting in families losing touch with support facilities.