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## Review of the East Manchester Neighbourhood Nuisance Team

Commissioned by the East Manchester Neighbourhood Nuisance Team

Carolyn Kagan and Asiya Siddiquee  
Community Psychology Team

**July 2005**

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RIHSC: Research Institute for Health & Social Change

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*With thanks to all those who participated in the review at short notice and to Anna Kagan for some statistical analysis.*

## **Executive summary and recommendations**

### **Context**

The community psychology team at Manchester Metropolitan University was commissioned in June 2005 by the East Manchester Neighbour Nuisance Team (EMNNT) to undertake a review of the working methods and outcomes of the team. The review aimed to:

1. Provide independent information about the work of the EMNNT;
2. Provide information from the perspectives of different stakeholders on the work of the EMNNT about the efficacy of its working methods and satisfaction with both intermediate and final outcomes of its practices;
3. To describe how intermediate and final outcomes are achieved through the specific working practices of the EMNNT, in particular the efficacy of its partnership working;
4. To assess the extent to which the EMNNT has achieved prevention in the area of neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

### **Method**

The study was a short term, mixed method review, wherein different kinds of information from different sources were collected. At the core of the review were the views of members of the EMNNT, key partners, families and people with whom the team has worked. The review assessed the work of the team in terms of:

- Aims and objectives;
- Referral and contact routes;
- Resources available for the team's work arising from local partnerships;
- Processes used by the team in its work;
- Intermediate outcomes (support for families, contracts with perpetrators, capacity building and partner organisations);
- Final outcomes (destinations of perpetrators, satisfaction of complainants)

Different sources of information were combined, including documentary evidence (reports, previous reviews, statistical summaries, minutes of partnership meetings, press cuttings); indirect sources (recently conducted surveys and reviews); direct sources, including telephone interviews, face to face interviews, group discussions and written requests for feedback. The information was used to provide a description and analysis of the processes of working used by the team and the outcomes achieved.

### **Summary of findings**

The EMNNT has retained its emphasis on early intervention, and some of the ways it has done this are outlined in the report. The way it has put into practice the key aspects of a preventive approach to neighbour nuisance; which characterised how the team was established, are exemplary. It has dealt with a high proportion of nuisance problems before they escalated into serious and enduring problems needing court actions. It has persisted with court actions with a small number of perpetrators when all other interventions have failed, or the seriousness of the nuisance warranted strict measures. It has contributed to community development via the attention it pays to helping residents become aware of what is, and is not nuisance behaviour. It has stimulated the effective operation of good, multi-agency partnerships; and has influenced how other agencies concerned with neighbour

nuisance work. There is a high level of satisfaction with the work of the team from different stakeholders.

## **Recommendations**

1. Whilst the number of ASBOs, or other court actions, provide simple metrics for the efficacy of a neighbour nuisance team, other criteria will be required to demonstrate the efficacy of an early intervention process. It has not been easy to establish which parts of the early intervention and prevention process have what kind of impact. This is, in part, due to the form in which monitoring data is collected. This, in turn, makes it difficult to quantify the value of the service and its working methods. Jarvis (2003) recommended that *the EMNNT, working with the steering group, agree and develop a tool that will quantify the value of the service received* (p.17). This would still be useful, not just as a means of estimating cost effectiveness, but strengthening the information about the effectiveness of different stages of early intervention. **Recommendation: Develop a set of indicators which will enable the monitoring and evaluation of the efficacy of early intervention steps (including the costs) to tackling neighbour nuisance.**
2. In this review we have tried to understand the process of early intervention and the underlying model of nuisance behaviour resolution. It seems that there is an implicit model being used, but this is not made explicit in publications. It would be useful, for any future comparisons with other methods of working for a clear description of the process of early intervention and the role that partnerships play in this to be developed. **Recommendation: Produce a description of the early intervention process and how both agency partnerships and citizen involvement contribute to this.**
3. During the course of the review, it became clear that whilst partner agency feedback was sought, there was little systematic collection of feedback information from communities (via their representatives), complainants or perpetrators. Yet, some of this type of information is capable of providing strong endorsement of the team's work, as well as facilitating learning for continual improvement. Some feedback is, of course, received through the everyday work of the team. However, a more organised collection of client satisfaction information would strengthen the team's work, enabling them both to understand what works and why, and to identify where improvements in the processes used might be made. **Recommendation: Collect feedback information in an organised way from communities, complainants and perpetrators.**
4. The ideological context nationally, in large part due to the ways the press cover responses to anti-social behaviour, celebrates hard enforcement approaches to anti-social behaviour. Local press coverage makes little specific mention of alternative responses. Whilst the approach adopted and the work of the EMNNT might be well known in the locality and be firmly embedded in community involvement in dealing with nuisance and disorder, wider dissemination of the approach and its benefits, to individuals, families, communities and authorities, would be useful. The EMNNT is well placed to ensure press coverage of early intervention successes. **Recommendation: Increase press releases and journalistic coverage of non-court action outcomes at different stages of early intervention.**
5. A large proportion of the EMNNT's work is linked to the private sector. The NDC funding stream into the team's work will cease in April 2006. Work will be needed to look at options for further funding which reflect the balance of the team's work. Any future funding mechanism will need to be flexible in order to incorporate the rapid developments in housing and the proportion of different kinds of housing in

the locality. **Recommendation: Develop a flexible framework for funding the team which reflects the balance of work undertaken by the team.**

6. The close working between the youth intervention officers is a strength of the team's work in relation to young people. A review is being undertaken of that role, and it will be important to clarify how the two teams will continue to work effectively in the future. The team also works closely with the Neighbourhood Wardens. Although we were unable to collect detailed information on agencies' and residents' understanding of the two roles, there appeared to be some potential for confusion. As external reviewers, it was not clear what the boundaries between wardens and response officers were. This could usefully be clarified, especially as the resources available to the team will be under review in the future. **Recommendation: Identify human, as well as financial resources available to the team in the future, and in particular the overlapping role boundaries of response officers and community wardens.**
7. The innovative and successful nature of the team, in terms of how it works and the results it has achieved, not just in tackling anti-social behaviour, but also in capacity building for agencies and communities, is validated by reports from stakeholders as well as from improving community safety statistics. The risk of deteriorating community safety and increased nuisance behaviours if the team were to compromise an early intervention approach are great. **Recommendation: The team should continue with its emphasis and experience in early intervention for tackling anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance for the foreseeable future.**

# 1. Introduction

Dealing with Neighbour nuisance is a key plank of the Government's regeneration, social exclusion, social cohesion and crime reduction strategies. A number of key pieces of legislation set the context for the work of neighbour nuisance teams working in areas of regeneration. These include the Crime and Disorder Act, (1998); Criminal Justice and Police Act (2001); Police reform Act (2002); and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act - Respect and Responsibility (2003). Linked to these statutes are other key reports, including the Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan (October 2003); Respect and Responsibility White paper (2003); and PAT 8 report on Anti-social Behaviour (2000).

Neighbourhood nuisance has been recognised as an important component of the Crime and Disorder strategy within the East Manchester New Deal for Communities (NDC) regeneration project since its inception in 1999. The East Manchester Neighbourhood Nuisance Team (EMNNT) is one part of a neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour reduction, prevention, and control strategy. Whilst neighbour nuisance is not confined to that perpetrated by young people, the updated delivery plan for 2003-6 states that:

*Youth nuisance has been highlighted in the latest Beacons residents survey as the second highest priority, second to crime in general. The East Manchester Neighbour Nuisance team have worked closely in partnership with GMP and projects like DISCUS in order to try and reduce the amount of reports relating to youth nuisance but have found that this type of work is more time intensive and is often carried out at the expense of their more usual work. .... (The team) Continues to help partner agencies tackle and reduce neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour across all tenures. The team is also involved in multi-agency work Crime and Disorder Partnerships and training and development for front line staff (Beacons for a Brighter Future, 2003).*

As the funding for the team is due to cease in 2006, a review has been commissioned to examine the work of the EMNNT.

## 1.1. Aims of the review

The community psychology team at Manchester Metropolitan University was commissioned in June 2005 by the EMNNT to undertake a review of the working methods and outcomes of the team. The review aimed to:

1. Provide independent information about the work of the EMNNT;
2. Provide information from the perspectives of different stakeholders on the work of the EMNNT about the efficacy of its working methods and satisfaction with both intermediate and final outcomes of its practices;
3. To describe how intermediate and final outcomes are achieved through the specific working practices of the EMNNT, in particular the efficacy of its partnership working;
4. To assess the extent to which the EMNNT has achieved prevention in the area of neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

It was agreed that the following tasks would be undertaken:

- Review existing documentation relevant to the activities of the EMNNT;
- Seek the views of local families and perpetrators of nuisance about the ways in which the EMNNT works to tackle anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance;
- Consult with professionals from partner agencies about the ways in which partnership working initiated by the EMNNT contributes to tackling neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour;
- Identify the processes and outcomes of the work of the EMNNT, supported by independently obtained evidence.

### **Methodology**

The study was a short term, mixed method review, wherein different kinds of information from different sources were collected. At the core of the review were the views of members of the EMNNT, key partners, families, and people with whom the team has worked. The review assessed the work of the team in terms of:

- Aims and objectives;
- Referral and contact routes;
- Resources available for the team's work arising from local partnerships;
- Processes used by the team in its work;
- Intermediate outcomes (support for families, contracts with perpetrators, capacity building and partner organisations);
- Final outcomes (destinations of perpetrators, satisfaction of complainants).

Different sources of information were used, including documentary evidence (reports, previous reviews, statistical summaries, minutes of partnership meetings, press cuttings); indirect sources (recently conducted surveys and reviews); direct sources, including telephone interviews, face to face interviews, group discussions and written requests for feedback.

Table 2.1 summarises the sources of information collected



**Table 2.1. Sources of information sought, by timescale and assistance required.**

Source of information	Notes
<b>Documentary analysis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery Plan</li> <li>• Relevant tasking group meeting minutes</li> <li>• Quarterly reports for last 2 years</li> <li>• Referral summaries</li> <li>• Press coverage and publicity about the work of EMNNT</li> <li>• Existing feedback from stakeholders</li> <li>• Existing articles written about EMNNT</li> <li>• Two previous evaluations of EMNNT</li> </ul>	Because of ward boundary and Divisional boundary changes, direct comparisons between existing sources of information and the team's current workings were not always possible
<b>Indirect sources:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback survey (May 2005) - statistics and comments</li> <li>• Previous research (Emanuel, 2004; Kagan, Caton, &amp; Amin, 2001)</li> <li>• Research into Youth Intervention Role (NDC 2005)</li> <li>• Quality of Life Survey: Ward analysis. Manchester City Council Nov/Dec 2004</li> <li>• Focus Group of youth perpetrators (NDC Evaluation officer 7.7.05)</li> </ul>	
<b>Direct sources:</b> Telephone interviews: 3 Registered Social Landlord (RSL) housing managers; 2 parents; and 2 resident-members steering group. Face to face interviews: EMNNT Manager; NDC Community Safety Officer; NDC evaluation officer undertaking evaluation of Youth Intervention Officer role. Group interview 4 EMNNT members	Whilst sought, no interviews were possible within the time scale with community warden (interview cancelled) or police officer
<b>Written feedback:</b> From those replying to feedback survey, May 2005 - 4 police officers; 2 youth intervention officers; community warden; community safety officer; stakeholders who it will not be possible to contact any other way, and possibly from: DISCUS, Foundations, Sure Start, Social Services, Manchester City Council Neighbour Nuisance Team	

## Analysis

Information from the different sources was discussed between the two researchers and main themes and issues were identified. Attention was paid to points of both agreement and disagreement between different stakeholders.

## 2. The East Manchester Neighbour Nuisance Team

### 2.1. Aims and objectives

The EMNNT was established 1999 within the *Beacons for a Brighter Future* New Deal for Communities (NDC) and SRB5 project. It was established to meet both SRB and NDC strategic objectives and priorities. The project appraisal report produced at the inception of the team outlined its aims and objectives:

- *To establish a dedicated cross tenure neighbour nuisance team, fully resourced with management and administrative backup. To establish and develop strong links with all appropriate service providers and other relevant agencies, community groups, voluntary groups and private landlord forums and to provide training to these agencies and groups as appropriate.*
- *To establish further links with regards to multi-agency working and developing best strategies for case intervention. Establish links with other neighbourhood strategies such as Best Value, Community Safety*

*initiatives and the Local Area Partnership, sub Divisional Partnership and Early Case Intervention Groups under the Crime and Disorder Act.*

- *To develop new and better links of communication between landlords in all tenures. To develop service level agreements to ensure that nuisance and anti-social behaviour is challenged effectively in the private, social or owner occupied housing sectors. To develop a means of exchanging information to this aim in accordance with the Data Protection Act.*
- *To encourage the reporting of incidents of anti-social behaviour. To establish a method of case work to deal effectively with nuisance and anti-social behaviour.*
- *The project is expected to cover all types of nuisance behaviour where it impacts on the quality of life of the residents and/or community. This will include the impact for the individual complainants/witnesses as well as the impact on estates/communities: p.4 (Nugent, 1999).*

## **2.2. Team composition and financial arrangements**

The team was established with, and currently has, a Manager (appointed in October 2004); an administration worker; and 3 response officers, each with responsibility for a geographical area. Two of the response officers had previously worked as housing officers with anti-social behaviour portfolios, and described how they used some of the same skills and benefited from knowledge of the area:

*I had a case load of anti-social behaviour as a housing officer, so I was used to case work... (Team member)*

*I was a housing officer working in East Manchester for 5 years in the same area. So I know the area extremely well and I know all the people involved, I've got a good background of the area. (Team member)*

They were able to compare working within the EMNNT with tackling neighbourhood nuisance as housing officers:

*I was a housing officer in an area where we didn't have a neighbour nuisance team, before the Government ensured every Local Authority had a strategy for dealing with neighbour nuisance. So we had a small number of cases and we just did it as an extra towards our work. It was mainly small incidences where you just write letters and go and visit them. You wouldn't seriously build a case up - you'd go to the police or quality officers. You'd deal with the smaller cases yourself, and write out a letter warning. (Team member)*

*(From the EMNNT side) we can do more. We've got more time to focus on the nuisance side of it, the way the housing officers have loads of different things to be doing. They can pass it (neighbour nuisance) on to us and we can get involved at an early stage. (Team member)*

There is a shared office, which facilitates good team working, particularly regarding sharing information and ideas:

*We speak to, get advice from each other, have a chat about it, seek advice. It's mostly informal. It's a small team. If someone's off holiday we do tend to know about each others cases and can work on them. (Team member)*

There has been some turnover and the team has operated under full strength at times (Jarvis, 2003). The EMNNT is now at full strength with newly appointed staff when two colleagues left earlier on in the year, to be replaced by two new members (Quarterly Report Oct – Dec 2004).

Initially the team was based in the New Deal Offices, but transferred to Eastlands Homes in 2003.

*So I think we've got that main link now to the community... and I think the fact that we're now based at Eastlands Homes which is the biggest landlord in this area, and everybody knows Eastlands Homes. (Team Leader)*

The team is currently financed from different sources. Fifty percent of funding comes from NDC and 50% from Registered Social Landlords (RSL), with contributions varying according to the number of properties held in the area. In addition Manchester City Council (MCC) pays a small amount to cover residual MCC housing stock and running costs. Court work linked to private landlords is charged to MCC or the landlord. The NDC funding will cease in April 2006, and there is uncertainty about what sources or what level of funding there will be, and whether the team will be able to preserve its early intervention approach to nuisance behaviour.

### **2.3. Need for and rationale for the team**

The team was established at a time when there were a number of issues in East Manchester affecting residents' quality of life and actual and perceived safety. The results of a residents' survey, undertaken in 1999, reported in the Delivery Plan, indicated:

- 40% of residents intended to move out of the area at sometime in the future;
- 52% of residents felt the area suffered from fairly bad or very bad nuisance problems;
- 28% thought it was a safe place to live;
- 47% of residents perceived the area to be less safe than it had been two years previously;
- 65% felt it was unsafe to walk alone after dark, fearing attack (86%), groups of youths (54%), drug dealing and users (39%).

- 25% of residents felt unsafe in their homes because of fear of break in (96%), fear of attack (55%), and fear of vandalism (46%).
- When challenged about anti-social behaviour, residents moved from one property or landlord to another in the area, continuing with their behaviour.

Some of these fears remained for a number of years, and a report in 2001 summarised a number of residents' views:

*Some people have virtually become prisoners in their own homes due to fear of going out, reflecting the general decline in safety of the area. P.8 (Kagan et al., 2001)*

Prior to the establishment of the team, local residents were involved in the planning of what kind of neighbourhood nuisance team should be established to deal with these problems. Key characteristics from the outset included cross tenure working; community development emphasis; ensuring all residents have an accessible central point of contact; and the use of a range of appropriate strategies to challenge anti-social behaviour, stressing early intervention.

### **2.3.1 Cross tenure working**

The EMNNT was to be the first cross tenure team in the country.

The Project Appraisal (NDC,1999a) said:

*Regardless of tenure, residents in East Manchester see crime and behaviour as a priority for action. A cross tenure nuisance team will for the first time bring a holistic approach to nuisance in general in a geographical area, ensuring that perpetrators cannot move from one tenure to another within the area, to avoid facing the consequences of their anti-social behaviour.... (p.7,)*

Residents were aware of this aspect, and were keen to have an established team which circumvented this problem:

*We had a problem, a very very great problem. If someone was evicted from a council house they could move round the corner into private landlord, and all you were doing there was moving a nuisance round the corner. (Resident 1)*

*Because in this area we had an awful lot of private landlords and we had a situation where people were being moved from one property because of anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood nuisance issues, and being moved round the corner just to create again into a private landlord situation. So what we said was its no use dealing with council tenants, you have to deal with the private tenants as well, that was essential. (Resident 2)*

### **2.3.2 A community development emphasis**

Awareness and information was to be a central aspect of the EMNNT's work:

*Raising awareness of all members of the community of the issues and the role of the individual and the community in tackling (anti-social behaviour) (NDC, project appraisal, p.2)*

An RSL member reinforced the importance of such awareness raising within the locality:

*Just raising the profile of the work within the area and reducing the tolerance that people have of low level crime and antisocial behaviour, I think they've been quite clear in saying that we shouldn't tolerate this. (Housing Officer 1)*

### **2.3.3 Accessible point of contact and partnership working**

The strengths of the partnership approach of the EMNNT has been recognised as one of the national examples of innovation in tackling anti-social behaviour (Nixon, Blandy, Hunter, & Reeve, 2003). This was built into the design of the team from its inception.

Commenting on the partnership working aspect, both residents and housing officers agreed this was a successful means of working:

*...the neighbourhood nuisance team and the housing officer working together as a team, and this was another thing, it brought all these teams together. Because one was doing a little bit, another was doing a little bit, and nothing was getting done. Whereas when they all pulled together and worked as a team things were so much easier to manage, and problems were solved a damn sight more... (Resident 1)*

*I think structurally to work in partnership with the residents and other social landlords and the police has been one of the fundamental things about us working together to collectively look at the issues and try to solve them. Taking a lead in partnership work. Just raising the profile of the work within the area and reducing the tolerance that people have of low level crime and antisocial behaviour, I think they've been quite clear in saying that we shouldn't tolerate this. (Housing Officer 1)*

Accessibility was an additional essential characteristic from both the perspective of professionals and residents:

*The team will work to tackle all types of neighbour nuisance, not only severe anti-social behaviour, but including noise nuisance and private sector enforcement. This will be achieved by giving all residents an accessible central point of contact, the team developing good working relationships with other enforcement departments. (NDC, project appraisal, p.2)*

*I think they've provided a quick accessible support service to people who otherwise would've felt very isolated and alone dealing with problem neighbours and criminals in their neighbourhood. (Housing Officer 2)*

#### **2.3.4 Early intervention and multi-agency working**

The team prides itself on its early intervention approach, as this is something that not only distinguished it from other teams, but in 1999 early intervention for neighbour nuisance was cutting edge practice:

*The work we do, its not crime, in terms of the work we do, youth intervention, it's like the last line before they get a criminal record. We're giving them, in early intervention, the chance to stop whatever they're doing before they do get into the criminal system. We don't leave things to get to the point where we have to take legal action. The major difference in what we do, we get to the point where someone's been seen congregating on the street or throwing stones, or whatever, and we step in there and issue warnings to the parents, rather than waiting until someone's hit on the head and hospitalised then we issue an ASBO and then we get them arrested and then they're in the criminal system. They have got more of an opportunity to stop. So most of the people on our books are not in the criminal system. We are tackling the problems before it gets to that stage. (Team member)*

The planning group, which had included the views of residents from a number of local workshops, were committed to a preventive approach from the outset:

*Well we said from the beginning, that's what residents wanted – we didn't want a situation where we're throwing ASBOs out right left and centre. If we can deter bad behaviour from the beginning that would save us a lot of time and a lot of grief to be honest. They work with the youth inclusion officers and when names keep coming up within the Task force meetings they look at how all the agencies can work together, and neighbour nuisance at the end of the day is the big stick, but they actually put things forward. But if its low nuisance, they'll often use the intervention officer to go and have a word with the family, to say 'this is the road you're leading to, and it's not acceptable'. A lot of the acceptable behaviour contracts that have been signed have not been breached. (Resident 2)*

This emphasis was built into the formal proposal:

*(The team will use) appropriate strategies to challenge anti-social behaviour, by either challenging and diverting individuals away from nuisance using a multi-agency approach, or by taking serious or repeat 'offenders' to court to challenge their behaviour. (The team) will apply various strategies to tackle anti-social behaviour and to create trust in local community, agencies and individuals, thus enhancing the ability to respond positively and effectively to reported incidents... It should be stressed that one of the key aims of this project is to challenge and moderate behaviour. It is only after these aims have been exhausted that legal sanctions will be sought (unless the act of anti-social behaviour is so severe that immediate action is required) (NDC, project appraisal, p.2, 8)*

This ethos has continued to develop throughout the duration of the team's existence, and is highlighted as one of its strengths:

*A softly approach where possible or an early intervention where possible, gives us much more better outcome in the sense that there's more likely to be a fruitful relationship with whoever's on the receiving end than there would be if the only intervention was a legal action or a hard approach rather than a soft approach. (Housing Officer 2)*

*I think they do try to deal with it (anti-social behaviour), instead of just continually having enforcement action, they try to deal with the anti-social behaviour before it gets to that stage. And I think they try to engage with young people, rather than being seen as something that's always a punishment. So I would say having that different approach and making it applicable to East Manchester has been their achievement. (Housing Officer 3)*

#### **2.4. Steering group**

Local residents whilst having a central role in planning and establishing the team, remain involved as members of a multi-agency steering group. The group meets quarterly; and currently consists of the following 23 members:

- 2 members from Northern Counties Housing Association
- 1 member from Eastlands Homes Partnership Limited
- 4 residents
- 2 members from East Manchester Landlords Information Service
- 2 members from the East Manchester Neighbourhood Nuisance Team
- 1 member from Equity Housing Group
- 1 member from Mosscare Housing Limited
- 1 member from Family Housing Association
- 2 members from The Guinness Trust
- 3 members from Manchester City Council (private sector, and local services)
- 2 private landlords
- 2 members from St. Vincent's Housing Association.

Although Jarvis (2003) identified certain problems with the consistency of the steering group, members attest to its strengths throughout the project:

*The structure of the steering group has remained fairly constant throughout the project, so that must be a strength. And it's brought together housing providers and residents to manage this project, to oversee this project, so that has helped cement our relationships with other partners on that steering group. (Housing Officer 2)*

#### **2.5. Local Context in which the team works**

The team works within the New East Manchester regeneration scheme (Beswick, Clayton and Openshaw) and is embedded within the Manchester City Council's Community and Crime and Disorder Strategies. The Community Strategy, in part, aims to:

*Increase the confidence of communities to report incidences of crime and disorder, and to give confidence that effective action will be taken when they do. Too often, incidences of crime and disorder are not reported to the Police or other agencies because people believe that nothing will be done. Manchester residents need to have the confidence that, if they report a crime or disorder incident, the relevant agencies will take action. This in turn requires residents to see that public agencies have got their priorities right; that they will support victims and the vast majority of law-abiding citizens; and take more effective action against the minority responsible for crime and anti-social behaviour.*  
Section 5 (MCC., 2002)

The City Council has its own Neighbour Nuisance team, based in Manchester Housing. Manchester's activities in neighbour nuisance, particularly in relation to the large number of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) it has secured over recent years<sup>1</sup>, have received wide publicity and accolades from the Government; and a simplistic notion appears to be applied that the number of ASBOs indicates success at dealing with nuisance behaviour. More recently this concept of ASBO levels as an indicator of success has been challenged (Burney, 2005). However, a review of the press cuttings relating to the EMNNT in June 2005 indicated a total emphasis on ASBO procurement, and no mention of other ways of reducing or preventing neighbour nuisance.

This emphasis on ASBOs is bound to influence the public's expectations of how neighbour nuisance is to be dealt with. In East, Manchester, however, involvement of residents from the start is thought to be an important channel through which the preventive aspirations and practices of the EMNNT are promoted:

*Most residents - tenants groups - know we work differently. We're not the central team and we're not going to jump on somebody who's spitting in the street and give them an ASBO - we're not going to do that. ..They're happy with the way we work. (Team member)*

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<sup>1</sup> Nearly 3,500 successful legal actions - injunctions, anti-social behaviour orders and more recently equipment seizures following noise nuisance - have been carried out by the City Council's Nuisance Strategy Team, set up in 1995 (Press release, 12 May 2004: Manchester City Council. [www.manchester.gov.uk/news/2004/may/tackle.htm](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/2004/may/tackle.htm)). In 2004 Greater Manchester (the vast majority coming from Manchester) secured 14.9% of all the ASBOs in England, 46% of which were for juveniles compared to 40% for England. Between 2002 and 2004 there was a 20% increase in the number of ASBOs secured in Greater Manchester compared with a 16% increase in England ([www.CrimeReduction.gov.uk](http://www.CrimeReduction.gov.uk) retrieved 26.7.05). Between 17-50% of ASBOs in Manchester are breached - depending on the source of information.



*Tenants' reps haven't changed since the team was formed and they fundamentally got the nuisance team as they wanted - through workshops - that this would be the way forward for East Manchester. Because of its unique demographic spread and there's so much private rented stock and council and RSL stock. The situation was historically the people would be evicted through the nuisance team and flit from landlord to landlord. Hence the (this) team was set up with early intervention. From that set up time the tenants' reps haven't changed so the ethos is still very very much strongly held - this is the way we do it. Because people are still here, the Tenant's groups are quite strong in East Manchester. It's very parochial, the message still does filter down at tenant level. People don't ring up and say why aren't you ASBOing, they ring up and say 'what can you do for us?' or 'this is the way it is going on in my street.' (Team member)*

Whilst it is not the purpose of this review to examine the work of the City team, insofar as it interfaces with the EMNNT, shares some of the same partners, and provides a local context, some observations will be included. The City team and the EMNNT have some different ways of working and some respondents within this review contrasted the approaches.

RSLs highlighted the good communication and the successful results once legal action is taken of EMNNT:

*I think we've had better results in terms of one in terms of working with them (the EMNNT) and our residents perhaps, or other residents in the area. But some of the results in terms of legal action, then we've been much more successful in legal action with them than with their peers. (Housing Officer 1)*

*Contrasted totally with our relationship with the central team, where often we only find out about their involvement with our residents at the point at which they're considering legal action or something like that, and it'll be very sort of dictatorial. They'll come and say 'right, we're doing this, we want you to come along, and we want you to pay for that sort of thing'. We often get an invoice without any explanation of what it's for... (Housing Officer 2)*

Residents too, praised the EMNNT for their accessibility and effectiveness in preventing nuisance escalating so that legal action has to be taken:

*Well we had no confidence in the central team and to be honest to this day I've still got no confidence in that team because of what I'm hearing from other areas that deal with them... Because at one time we weren't even allowed a phone number for the central team, it was cloaked in secrecy. The difference that happened when the team (the EMNNT) itself was established was that people had a door to knock on and talk to somebody whenever they needed to. (Resident 2)*

*We brought in ABC orders in this area, you know through crime and community safety. The central team don't use them. I have a friend (a resident who's been dealing with the central team) and they have been moved from officer to officer – there's no dedicated officer. Whereas in this area, we have a dedicated officer for the 3 areas – Beswick, Clayton, and Openshawe, plus a team leader. So they specifically know their area and get to know what's going on in their area. The central team are quite distant from us. (Resident 2)*

### **3. Working methods and processes**

#### **3.1. Information, access and referral**

The team works hard to ensure that local people and agencies and professionals know about its work, how to make contact and the location of the team. Leaflets are distributed, and notices put in the local paper. Contacts usually, but not only, in the form of complaints about nuisance or disorder are made by residents, professionals, police, housing officers and so on:

*We take referrals and reports about anti-social behaviour from various sources because we're working on an across tenure basis, so landlords, residents, home owners, private tenants, via housing associations, via housing officers. And our remit is to, by using a various number of early intervention techniques, we try and combat and resolve anti-social behaviour in East Manchester. (Team member)*

One parent, who recently contacted the team to request their assistance in dealing with her son who was getting into bad company, described how she got in touch:

*I'd had some dealing some time before with another lad. And I get the leaflets. The numbers always on. So I phoned and talked to (team member) and they got a letter out the following day. I can't fault them. (Mother of teenage son)*

From the team's point of view, open access works:

*I can give you a couple of examples of people who actually have approached us for help because they've heard that we've been successful with other people. We had a lady ring in 2 weeks ago and said my son's getting out of hand, and I believe that you've been successful in the past. I know somebody who worked with you and came to see you, their son is now great, can you help me? (Team Leader)*

This view was reiterated by the residents, who emphasised the importance of the personal relationships gained through open access:

*Our team was specifically for our area, looking at local issues, to have an open door policy to have a face really that tenants could actually speak to, one-to-one to, and not to have to speak to somebody in secret. (Resident 2)*

From the data provided through the quarterly reports, it is clear that the team has considerable success in resolving cases at an early stage (see Figure 4.1, Section 4.1 for number of cases and referrals taken throughout 2004).

### **3.2. Progress of cases**

The team has a well worked out process for dealing with complaints within specified time scales.

Figures 3.1- 3.4 summarise the processes of dealing with complaints ranging from urgent to low level.

The core of the process is:

- Referral –
- Details on database –
- Nominated response officer issued –
- Letter of acknowledgement and officer link to complainant –
- Initial assessment and prioritisation –
- Action plan –
- Investigation and the collection of evidence through observation, dialogue and witness statements –
- Letter to perpetrator –
- Check if nuisance continues –
- Invite in for interview –
- Perpetrator either admits, denies or makes a counter allegation which would then be investigated in its own right.



Figure 3.1: Actions and time scale of EMNNT work

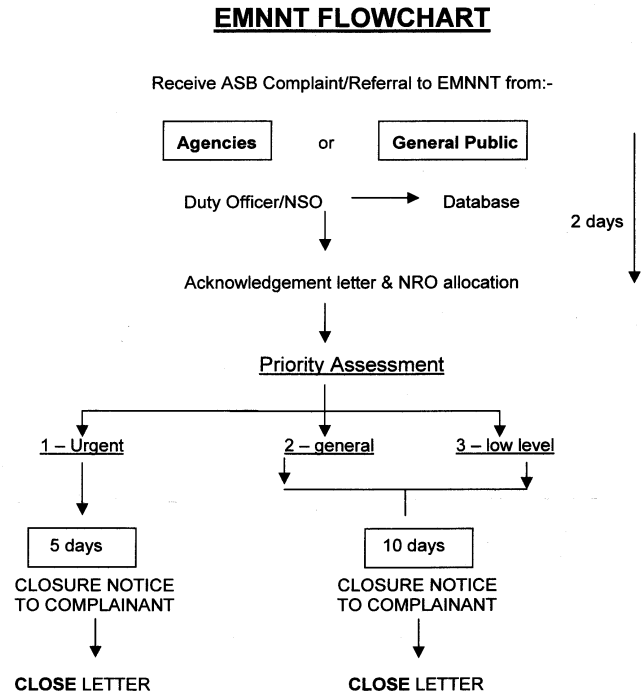
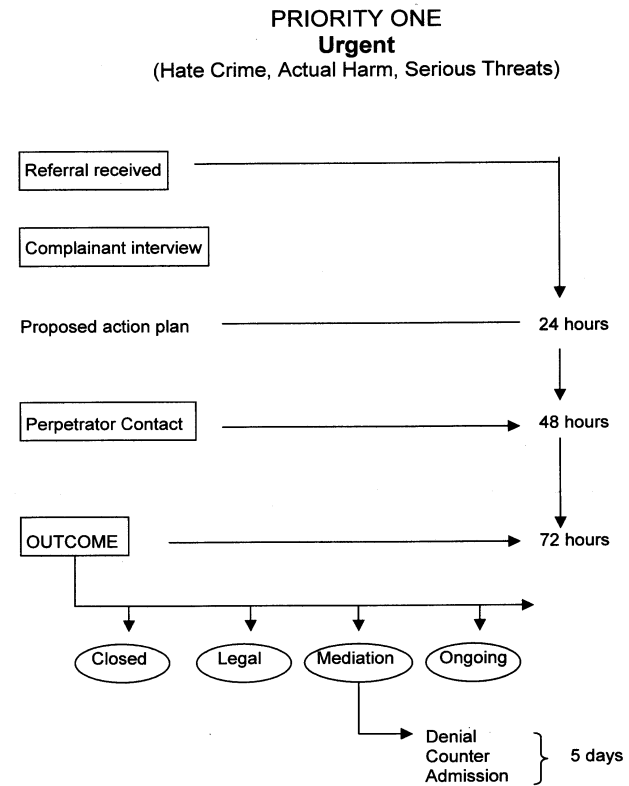


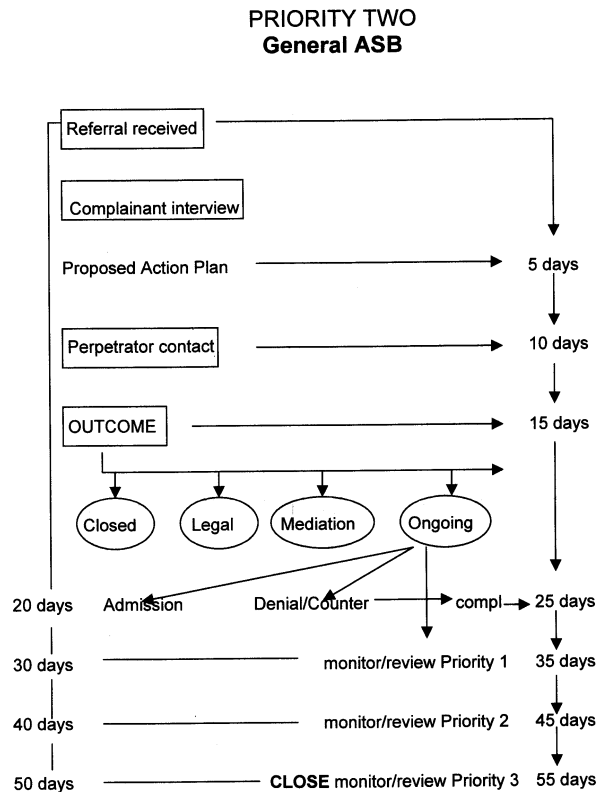
Figure 3.2: Action and time scale of EMNNT - urgent cases



**NB**

1. All days are 'working days'.
2. Case may be re-prioritised at ANY stage (therefore follow appropriate timescales).
3. MAXIMUM timescales given subject to change as required on individual case basis.
4. RSL referrals may be returned at initial stage subject to EMNNT request for further information.

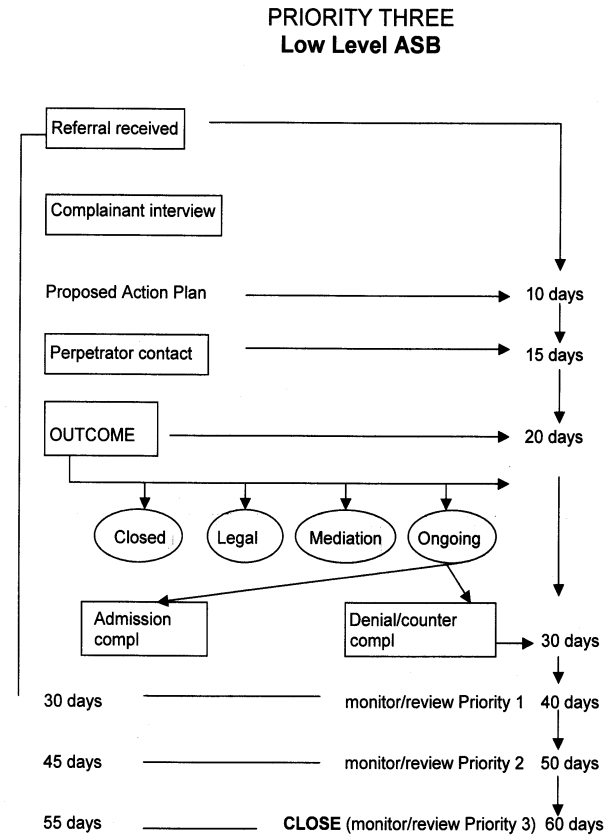
**Figure 3.3 Action and time scale - general anti-social behaviour**



**NB**

1. All days are 'WORKING DAYS'.
2. Case may be re-prioritised at ANY stage (therefore follow appropriate timescales).
3. MAXIMUM timescales given subject to change as required on individual case basis.
4. RSL referrals may be returned at initial stage subject to EMNNT request for further information.

**Figure 3.4 Action and time scale - low level anti-social behaviour**



**NB**

1. All days are 'WORKING DAYS'.
  2. Case may be re-prioritised at ANY stage (therefore follow appropriate timescales).
  3. MAXIMUM timescales given subject to change as required on individual case basis.
- RSL referrals may be returned at initial stage subject to EMNNT request for further information.

There is an escalating series of measures used by the team in tackling anti-social behaviour.

### **3.3. Early intervention**

As the team has a remit for early intervention and prevention of neighbour nuisance, considerable effort is made to deal with problems early on and prevent them getting worse. To some extent the efficacy of the good working relationships the team has with other agencies, as well as its accessibility, ensures that they do get notified of problems at an early stage.

*...if we had say maybe a group of 20 youths who we've been told were causing problems, again different from other teams, either myself or another member of the team would go out in the evening, possibly partnership with another agency – i.e. the wardens, or youth intervention. We would identify those youths, identify what the problems are, and we would invite those youths with the parents in. (Team Leader)*

This kind of early intervention has a knock on effect of strengthening families and thereby communities:

*So if you can intervene early and stop that happening, you're not affecting one child, you're affecting two maybe three, and in the whole turn of that you're keeping a much happier family and maybe keeping the family together. And if you do that, you're also creating a much more sustainable community. So we're very different in that it's giving people another chance basically. Offer support, offer a long-term solution, if all else fails go down the legal route – but listen, that's the best thing, listen to what's going on around. (Team Leader)*

#### **3.3.1 Initial decision making and diversion**

The initial task is to work out if the complaint is valid. Complainants are contacted for further information and confirmation that the nuisance is continuing. Some complaints go no further.

Initial assessment may indicate that some complaints are not valid nuisance complaints:

*We're objective third parties, as well as the landlord or whoever is complaining to us. If they are complaining on behalf of somebody else, then we can observe ... early intervention means paying them calls, interviews and discussions with the people who are complaining and we can assess the nuisance as well, find out if it is a valid complaint of nuisance or anti-social behaviour. (Team member)*

*When we get an initial referral I ask them what time of day or days of the week, when it's actually happening. We then make an arrangement to go at that time. If they say it's actually happening now, some cases, you would actually go at that time. We can't always drop everything and dash out, at that day - we're not a response unit, we couldn't always do that... It's really helpful if you can on occasions like that. (Team member)*

At this early stage, if there is no valid complaint, the neighbourhood nuisance team is involved in making the complainant aware of what does and does not constitute nuisance. This is not always welcomed, but is an important intervention to stop either the incident escalating or further invalid complaints. An example was given by a team member:

*Two or three weeks ago I got a phone call from a tenant who was complaining of very loud music from a next door neighbour. I went straight out, like she says it's happening now. So I called out and it was on, the music, but it wasn't loud. And I had to tell her that, I said 'Look, its fine, the way this is being played'. I couldn't even hear it at the bottom of the garden or through the front door. But she was complaining that the music was loud. I said it's just a clash of lifestyles, there's nothing at all that we can do about it, it's not excessive... She wasn't happy at first, but we haven't had any more complaints from her. As far as we're concerned the case is closed. I spoke to her on the phone twice since and she says no, things have been ok, so I think she's just accepted it now, that that has to be the level... If it hadn't been playing when I'd visited, I'd have asked her to phone me next time it's playing. If it's during the day, I'd have a call out and see. (Team member)*

Advice to neighbours to do what they can to sort problems out between them is sometimes given. For many people, though, by the time a complaint is made to the EMNNT, it is difficult for neighbours to talk to each other about it without some assistance from the Team:

*We give advice. Dogs barking(for example)- 'either let them out or get someone to look after them'. I've had to explain to someone who was complaining about the use of dishwasher or washing machine or something. We advise them why it's not a nuisance in the first place and if you have problems perhaps speak to the person you're complaining about. We don't just send letters out - I actually ask them if they feel they can approach the person they're complaining about first of all. We need to make them aware that yes, we'll go and approach this person on your behalf and we won't identify you, but at some stage it may carry on. It may resolve the problem quicker if you speak to them yourself. Some people do – but more often they say they can't speak to them. (Team member)*



*We can look at the bigger picture. If we're going to send a nuisance letter to somebody, they tend to come and say 'what's this all about? You got the neighbourhood nuisance team on me? I don't know what this is'. And their attitude is very confrontational and it makes the matter a lot worse. It can be useful for low level nuisance to get it resolved before a warning letter is sent. (Team member)*

In addition to invalid complaints, malicious complaints can sometimes be detected early on in the process:

*I've been out to somebody who was complaining about excessive dog barking and he's made several complaints about the people who live below him. We take along every complaint he's made and actually investigate it. We've reached the stage now where we are going to tackle him as somebody who's making malicious complaints... That becomes a nuisance in itself... We get counter complaints from the people who are initially complained against. So we have to take those on board as well. (Team member)*

At these very early stages, response officers in the team have to use their judgement and experience to decide if an investigation is to go further. One team member talked of the judgements used in relation to youth nuisance, which is often general nuisance behaviour like playing football, hanging about on street corners, congregating, drinking on the street or smashing bottles.

*It's a judgement call. If there's groups of youth hanging about and they aren't doing anything, we wouldn't take action on that. But if they're hanging around and literally intimidating people by using abusive language, they're drinking on the streets and smashing bottles on the street, that's the nuisance in itself. If they're seen perhaps doing that by CCTV footage, we don't have to have somebody who's phoning in to complain, we can act on the evidence we've got in front of us... We work at night as well, so if there's some people calling us up and saying like from 7 to 10 at night there's a group of youths hanging about such a place, we would then try and callout between 7 and 10 at night and have a look and see what's going on... are they just hanging about, are they there drinking are they on bikes, are they on motor bikes, are they throwing stones? We just try and get out there and see what's going on. (Team member)*

### **3.3.2 Letters to perpetrators**

Once it has been decided that there is some nuisance to address, a letter is sent to the perpetrator. This may be their first insight into the problem, and once they are aware of it, they themselves may take some action to stop it.

*Some people are not aware it's going on. E.g. I've had a call from somebody - they've got dogs next door. The couple obviously go out to work and they're not aware the dogs are barking throughout the day. It might be just a case sending them a letter making them aware of what's going on. It might be something as simple as that. With awareness if you can control it. (Team member)*

If the problem does not stop on receipt of a letter outlining clearly perpetrators' responsibilities and the consequences if the behaviour persists, the perpetrator is invited in to discuss the allegations with a response officer. The neighbourhood nuisance team is essentially acting as a mediator, although not in a face-to-face situation. During these discussions, response officers may give information about facilities and forms of help (such as social services, family support, youth support, mediation and so on). If these options are presented sensitively, this will often be received positively, as a team member pointed out in the context of youth nuisance:

*More often than not the parent might not know these family supports are around. Especially if you get the parent in and talk about the bigger picture, she may be a single parent, 3 teenage boys, very confrontational situation, parent can't deal with... I've often referred with the parents' permission or desire to refer on to DISCUS or Sure Start, and that agency will then come along and try and work with the family to put in strategies, barriers and boundaries and talk to them about acceptable behaviour. It's another way we can directly help by making them aware of the agencies, it's in my toolkit along with ABC contracts, and mediation. (Team member)*

A mother of a son who was "certainly no angel" said of these meetings:

*They're very helpful. They're on the same wavelength, she (EMNNT team member) is trying to help him, not work against him. I want what's best for my son and they do too. (Mother of teenage son causing considerable nuisance)*

The outcome of the interview is either an admission to the nuisance, or denial of the complaint, or a counter allegation against the complainant:

*Complete denial or accepted that they made the noise or broke window. Usually denial. Then I give them the allegations and explain that it will become a case and be investigated. If they haven't done it, then the investigation won't show. But I tell them it's the best time to stop 'cos people will be making observations - maybe (put this) in a standard letter - people will be keeping diaries, collecting evidence from witnesses. Then (I) warn them of the any consequences. (Team member)*

Once an alleged perpetrator receives the initial letter, there is little reported harassment, although it does happen. Confidentially of the complainant is assured as far as is possible:

*I'm aware of one when that happened. They then went and challenged the people they believed had complained against them (in this case they were the ones who had complained) saying 'I've got this letter, they can't do anything to me'. It was referred back to the nuisance team. It didn't go anywhere. We keep everything confidential, but we also make the complainant aware of that as well so they don't say 'yes it was me' and hold their hands up. Under no circumstances are we going to tell the perpetrators who's complained against them... We have to make it clear that although we won't reveal their identity, sometimes the very nature of the complaint will reveal them... Our warning letters to the perpetrators do state quite clearly that any witnesses that are harassed will be dealt with under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. At this point the police step in. (Team member)*

As most allegations are denied at this time, further evidence is usually collected, involving on-going action which may include further advisory meetings, investigation and collection of evidence by the neighbourhood nuisance team, usually in close partnership with other agencies.

Eventually the case will either be closed, proceed to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC), an ASBO warning, or court action.

### **3.3.3 Partnership working and interconnections**

Partnership working is the foundation of the whole process. Referrals arise from partner agencies with a good understanding of the team's work. Appropriate referrals mean that early intervention is more likely to succeed.

Referrals also arise in the local Tactical Assessment Tasking Meetings. These multi-agency meetings typically have attendance from 17 or more local agencies concerned with crime, disorder and nuisance. Meetings are regular (at least monthly), and are primarily concerned with the sharing of information and intelligence between agencies, as well as follow up information gathering between meetings. Whilst the focus of the meetings is to a large part on crime, they are an important point of reference for the neighbourhood nuisance team, not only for referrals, but also for information:

*We get some referrals from tasking meetings and we also report back what referral we've had and inform the police about hot spot areas that we think they need to patrol more frequently. We don't have any powers to stop and search people, we can't seize alcohol, and we can't even ask people on the street their names and expect an answer. We haven't got the authority to do that. Again, it's identifying people. So if we have seen a group of youths and we don't know who they are, if the police have perhaps stopped and searched them they can provide us their names. And we can take action then. We don't just ASBO gangs of youths. We act against individual people who have perpetrated anti-social behaviour. (Team meeting)*

Collaboration with the police is not confined to tasking meetings:

*We work with the police a lot outside the tasking group, that's a useful point of contact for things that are already there. If there are nuisance activities that we're investigating, each of us contacts their PCs and Sergeants on a regular basis outside of the meeting. (Team member)*

In addition to tasking meetings, team members also attend Area Casework Panels. These meetings are also multi-agency, but focus on support for problem families. Referrals from the team to this group may be done in a further attempt to prevent nuisance behaviour getting to court action:

*Sometimes the whole family is the issue and I've had to refer them to the ACP Area Casework Panel. It's another multi-agency approach. Rather than the tasking meetings where you meet and get the police involved and it's led by them and their statistics, ACP is referring problem families. They have to have certain criteria to fulfil before they can be referred. To refer them to ACP means there are serious issues. Parents aren't able to control children at all or they're not interested. If you haven't got parents who are able to control their children, you can't even consider parenting order, cos you need to be able to enforce the parenting order. Then it's relying on social services to make sure they engage with the family, checking the kids are attending school, there's so many things... we try to make sure we've taken every opportunity to resolve the issues before it gets to court. (Team member)*

Local Area Partnership meetings involve agencies concerned with crime, disorder and nuisance as well as local people. This gives the team opportunities to feedback information to the local community, as well as keeping live the issue of community members taking some part in collecting and giving information about anti-social behaviour.

*We're constantly working on their behalf, if nothing's happening we try and get back to them and tell them why nothing's happening. Sometimes it's about explaining to them what we need them to do.. If they don't do it, we' explain this is why we ask them to do it and we're not being able to do anything without the information. It's a lot about expectations. You can prevent a lot of 'nothings happening with this case' from your complainant if you're totally honest with them from the outset and explain that its very unlikely that they'll (perpetrators) get locked away for 10 years despite the injustice you (complainant) feel, and explain to them we need evidence from them as they're the people who have experienced this first hand. Success of the case will depend on their co-operation. If al these factors are made quite clear to them, then we can head off a lot of complaints. We can only act on good information, we can't act on suspicion. (Team member)*

Residents are also strongly represented on the multi-agency steering group for the team, and have good relationships with the team, which means they do not need to wait for a formal meeting to contact the team with any queries or feedback:

*We have resident reps for different areas. If there's any problem they just give us a call and let us know if there's any grievances or problems in that area with certain people. We have good relationships with them. (Team member)*

With regard to youth nuisance, close working relationships exist between the team and the youth intervention officers (YIO) employed by NDC. The role grew from the neighbourhood nuisance team and is currently being evaluated. They refer people to the team, pass intelligence and information to team members and most importantly, have good, detailed knowledge about young people and their families in the context of neighbour nuisance. An important part of the YIO role, alongside neighbourhood nuisance team is the issuing of ABCs, pre-ASBO warnings or ASBOs. Following investigations carried out by YOI and /or neighbourhood nuisance team, and discussion between them of the best course of action, a meeting is held. Typically a young person will be brought in for a meeting at the police station with their parents, the housing manager, the police and a member of the neighbourhood nuisance team. A description of one such meeting was given:

*The child walks in with their guardian. It can be overwhelming for them, to be presented with all that's wrong with what he'd done. The youth intervention officer asks him why he's done it - to try and make him feel guilty and that he's done something wrong. The child is overwhelmed and tends not to say anything. Then they say it's someone else's fault and the YOI doesn't have any of it. Says 'what do you expect then, if you hang about with them?' They (the young people) all know the YOI. He knows the area and knows where they live. For the child to hear this and know all those people know about him... if he's coming in for the first time.. he can be taken aback, shocked. (NDC Evaluation officer)*

The team also has good partnership working with RSLs in the area, and the community wardens, as well as other agencies. When cases are discussed between agencies they are referred to as 'our cases' right from the start, indicating meaningful partnership working:

*With EMNNT it really does feel like we have a joint sort of agenda, a shared will to work in the same ways and a willingness on both part of the individuals to go the extra mile to do that. (Housing Officer 2)*

90% of those from partner agencies giving feedback via questionnaire issued in May 2005 by the team understood and were able to identify the different steps of preventive work undertaken by the team.

Figure 3.5 illustrates the work of the team based on solid foundations, with the bulk of the activity being preventative

**Figure 3.5: Foundations of early intervention neighbour nuisance work**



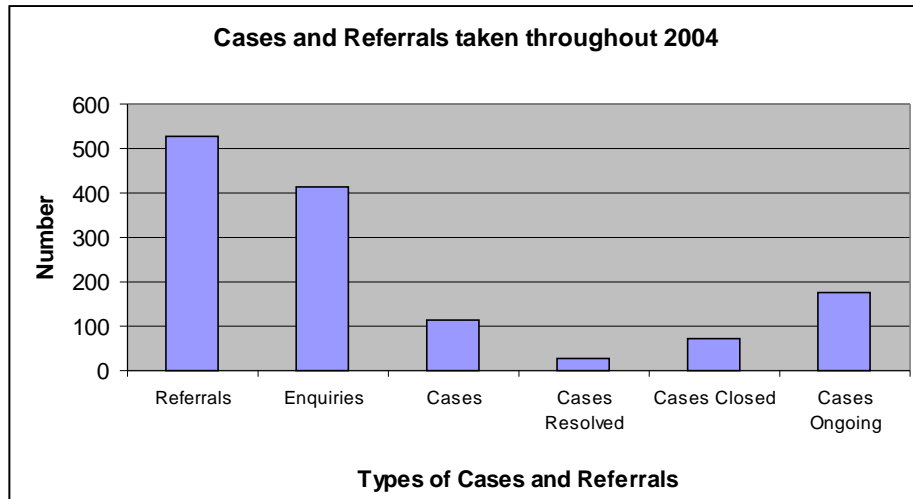
## **4. Results and outcomes**

### **4.1. Case outcomes**

Most cases are resolved at an early stage and do not proceed to court action. This is a crucial aspect of early intervention. It is not that the team does not take court action, but instead does what it can to resolve issues prior to this. Estimates of the cost of an ASBO range from £5,353, excluding social costs (HO, 2003; Whitehead, Stockdale, & Razzu, 2003) to £10,000 (YC, 2004), with further costs if they are breached. Different steps to dealing with anti-social behaviour have different costs (MCC., 2005) and it would be useful if the EMNNT were able to cost its different activities. Nevertheless, court actions are far more costly than other interventions and the EMNNT's value, marked by the few expensive court actions should be noted.

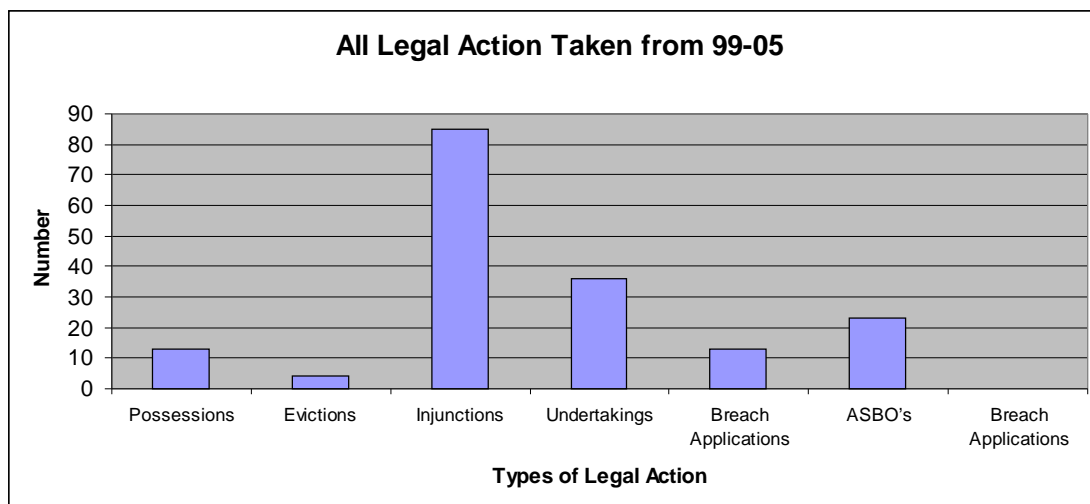
Figure 4.1 shows the progress of cases throughout one year (2004). Of 527 referrals 414 were dealt with in one way or another, before being formally established for ongoing casework. A further 99 were resolved or closed, leaving 175 cases ongoing with further investigations and actions.

**Figure 4.1: Number of different types of cases and referrals taken throughout 2004 (Source: Quarterly Reports)**



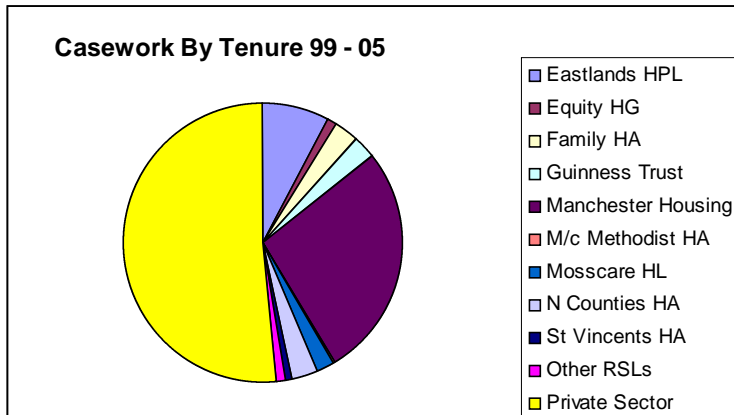
A very small proportion of cases result in court action. Of these, the majority are injunctions. In total from 99-05, 23 ASBOs have been issued (the total for Greater Manchester in the same period was 710).

**Figure 4.2: Type and frequency of legal action taken from 99-05 (Source: Quarterly Reports)**



The team has been successful in working cross-tenure, Figure 4.3 illustrates the proportion of cases in the different tenures.

**Figure 4.3: Proportion of case-work by tenure 1999 - 2005 (Source: Quarterly Reports)**



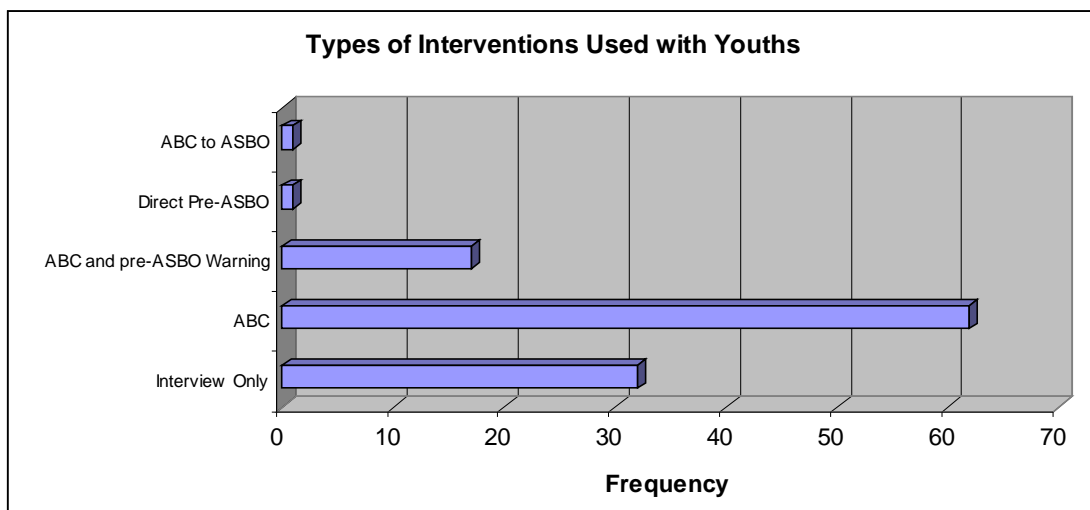
In total 48% of cases were from the social sector, whilst 52% were from the private sector.

It is likely that differences across landlords in the social sector is linked to the number of properties held in the case. This is an area where further exploration might be useful.

#### 4.2. Steps to cessation of nuisance - step off points

There are a number of points at which neighbour nuisance can be resolved before it reaches court action. This is the aim of early intervention and prevention. Figure 4.4 illustrates in relation to youth nuisance, the stepping off points for people along an escalating process of enforcement, or nuisance resolution points in the process of reducing and resolving neighbour nuisance.

**Figure 4.4: Frequency and type of intervention used with youths from 2003 to 2005 (Source: Youth Intervention Officer Records)**



As the above figure demonstrates, the most frequent intervention initiated with youths is that of an ABC. A small proportion who sign ABCs, then progress to a pre-ASBO warning, and only one youth was given a direct pre-ASBO warning, and one youth was issued directly with an ASBO. It is clear, therefore that the early intervention



work with young people is effective and relatively few ASBOs are taken out. There is some concern in dealing with ABCs and young people, that whilst parents or guardians take the matter seriously, the young people are more diffident:

*Facilitator: Did (the EMNNT) make you sign an ABC?*

*Youth Yes... I just signed anything. When they said 'sign', I did. We weren't allowed to annoy my next-door neighbour.*

*Facilitator: And have you annoyed him since?*

*Youth: (laughs) It was when I first come. (Youth Perpetrator Focus Group)*

### **4.3. Building Confidence in the Community**

An essential part of a preventative approach to tackling neighbourhood nuisance is to develop awareness of what constitutes nuisance, as well as tolerance and confidence within the community, and increased community safety. Different stakeholders in the EMNNT referred to the team's success in community developing:

*There's nothing worse than somebody's got a problem, frightened, and they meet someone really officious. We've never had that, they (the team) have always been tenant friendly. People trust them. They've listened to people and they've told them 'well I'm sorry this isn't neighbour nuisance, this is a police matter, its housing matter, but I will pass it onto them', and to me this is the biggest achievement because they've been approachable and accessible to residents, and that's something that people in Manchester never had before, and I don't think we'll ever have again if we lose them. (Resident 1)*

The team is seen as a crucial access point to liaise with other organisations and to ensure that concerns are dealt with:

*I think it's showed the community that there is somebody they can turn to... We've established right in the middle of this community, that there is a team there that listens, that will work with the police, that will take things up on their behalf. We will attend police meetings, and we'll challenge the police on what they haven't done for the community, and the police will do that for us. So I think they've got that main link now the community, to the multi-agency work who will raise issues for them in the right way and will try to work for what the community wants. (Team Leader)*

It is not only residents' confidence that has been built; housing partners express appreciation and satisfaction with the degree of co-ordination and availability of the team:

*I think if you know the EMNNT and you know what service they provide, and you've used that service, I think you'll feel a little bit more reassured that there might be somebody around that can help you with this problem if it gets out of hand, if you can't cope anymore with them lads at the bottom of the street or with that neighbour of yours that constantly plays loud music and will not listen to you, that at least you've got somewhere to go with it and you've got some confidence that something might get done about it. At least you've got an outlet for it, and that may reduce fear to some extent and maybe their, maybe the fear goes when you feel that you've got something to do with it... (Housing Officer 2)*

Whilst the team focuses on neighbour nuisance, residents and stakeholders are able to describe the contribution it makes to regeneration in general, as illustrated by this resident:

*I think it's had a big impact, as has the regeneration. I think it's telling people that there are things in place here, and bad behaviour won't be tolerated. I think a lot of people now have got a lot of confidence in our team, they know that they can come and speak to somebody whenever they want in confidence. (Resident 2)*

#### **4.4. Collective Approach to Tackling Neighbour Nuisance**

Partnership working is a strength of the team as discussed previously. Partnerships are not just important to the agencies involved, but contribute directly to a collective approach to tackling anti-social behaviour. When agencies are seen to be working together, they are taken more seriously and have a greater impact:

*A lot of the times just a word from the neighbourhood nuisance team was enough to stop these people in their tracks. The police were never involved because it didn't get that far, housing officers can only do a limited amount. But, if it was the neighbourhood nuisance team and the housing officer working together as a team, and this was another thing, it brought all these teams together. Because one was doing a little bit, another was doing a little bit, and nothing was getting done. Whereas when they all pulled together and worked as a team things were so much easier to manage, and problems were solved a damn sight more because these people they terrorise people, but they don't know that they can be brought to book. They can now, they never could before because that association was never there before. It might only be a threat to lose their home, but it's enough to make them stop. (Resident 1)*

Families do not see the work as undermining them, but also in strengthening their own efforts to tackle nuisance behaviour:

*So we would do very early interview with parents, children, intervention people, myself and a housing officer – so that the parents see that we're all here to support and engage with them and not just enforcement work. (Team Leader)*

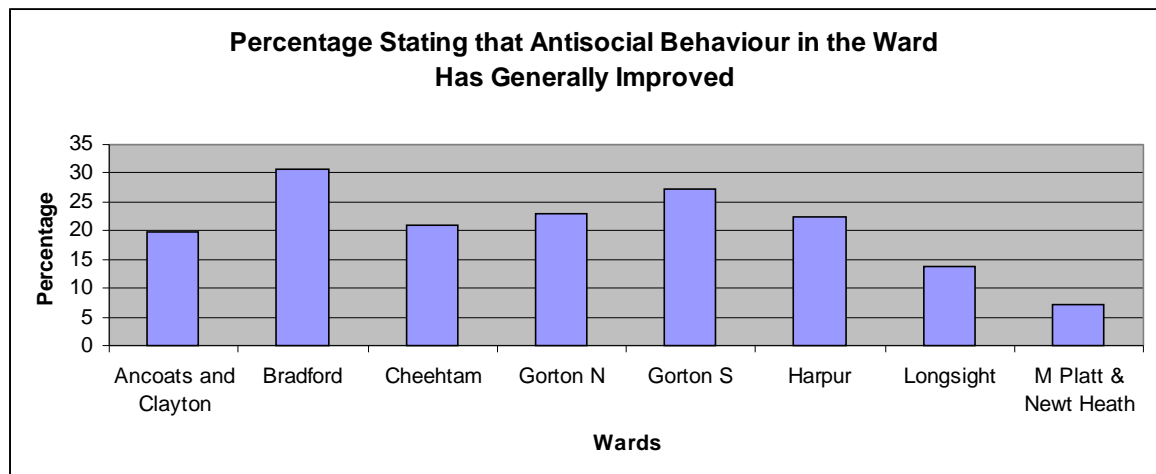
As far as the team's stakeholders are concerned, the way the team has worked fulfils its initial remit as confirmed by this resident who has been on the steering group from the start:

*Its done everything that the resident's asked them to do, to control the neighbourhood and get hold of some of this anti-social behaviour, and that's exactly what they've done. Like I say people are more threatened by the neighbourhood nuisance team being involved, and I think the close relationships within this area have been unique – the police, the housing and the neighbourhood nuisance team working at one with youth offending – anybody that needed to be involved, I mean they do joint interviews. So people know, and are quite aware that when a neighbourhood nuisance officer does an interview with a housing officer, you're talking very serious trouble here, and that sends a message to other people. (Resident 2)*

#### 4.5. Perceived Improvement in Community Safety

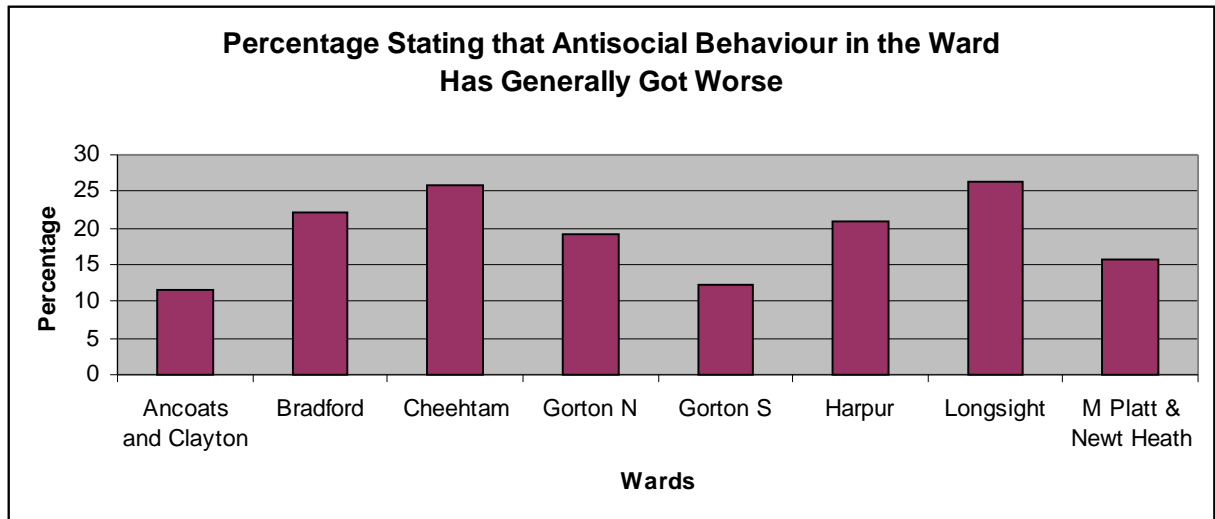
Along with other measures undertaken to improve community safety in East Manchester, the team has contributed to substantial improvements to the area in a number of dimensions of quality of life. The Manchester City Council Quality of Life Survey (2004) provides some information supporting this (the EMNNT's remit falls within the wards of Ancoats and Clayton, and Bradford). Figure 4.5 illustrates perceived improvements in anti-social behaviour.

**Figure 4.5: Ward comparisons: percentage of residents perceiving that anti-social behaviour in the ward has generally improved (Source: Manchester City Council Quality of Life Survey 2004)**



Between 20-30% of the sample across the whole district (Ancoats and Clayton, and Bradford) perceived that antisocial behaviour in the ward has generally improved, the improvement being greatest in Bradford ward. This is not the case in all other comparable districts. This can be contrasted with Figure 4.6 which illustrates how many respondents perceived antisocial behaviour in the ward has generally got worse:

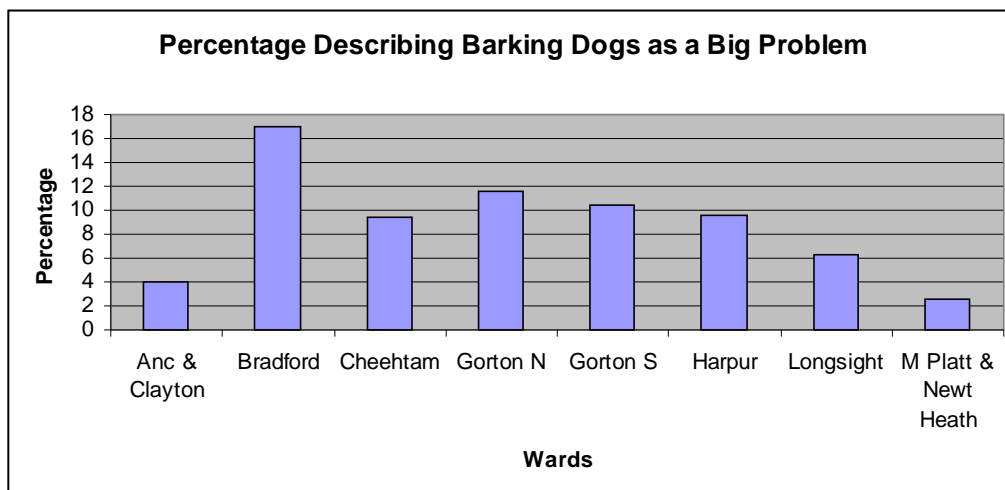
**Figure 4.6: Ward comparisons: percentage of residents perceiving that anti-social behaviour in the ward has generally got worse (Source: Manchester City Council Quality of Life Survey 2004)**



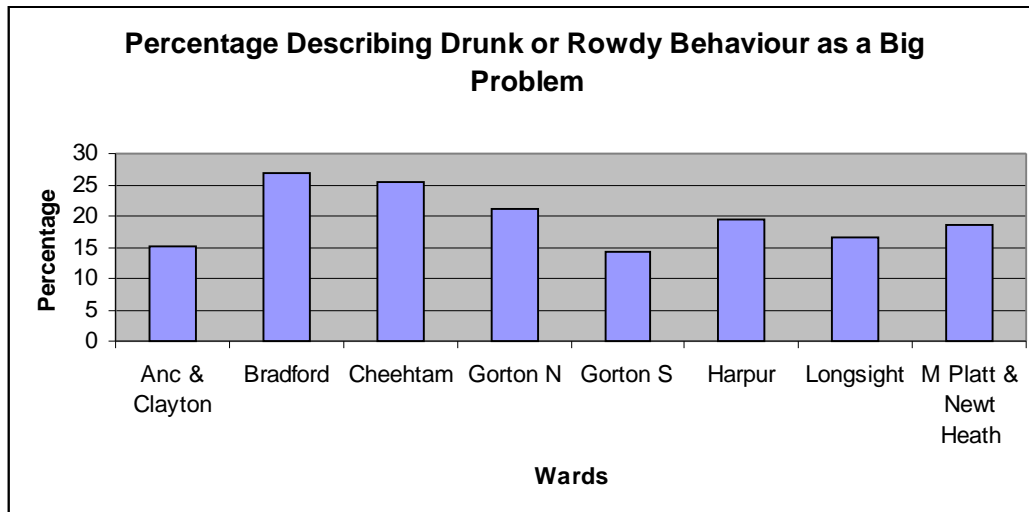
The above figure demonstrates that between 11 and 22% think anti-social behaviour in the ward has got worse. Fewer people in East Manchester, on average, compared with those in other comparable wards (with the exception of South Gorton) think anti-social behaviour has worsened.

The quality of life ward survey enables specific areas of nuisance to be looked at in some detail and these are useful because they demonstrate the need for continuing action. In particular, the survey can be used to highlight areas which need further improvement. This includes the nuisance of barking dogs (Figure 4.7), and drunk or rowdy behaviour (Figure 4.8); both of which are perceived to be high in Bradford but not Ancoats and Clayton.

**Figure 4.7: Ward comparison: percentage of people describing barking dogs as a big problem (Source: Manchester City Council Quality of Life Survey 2004)**

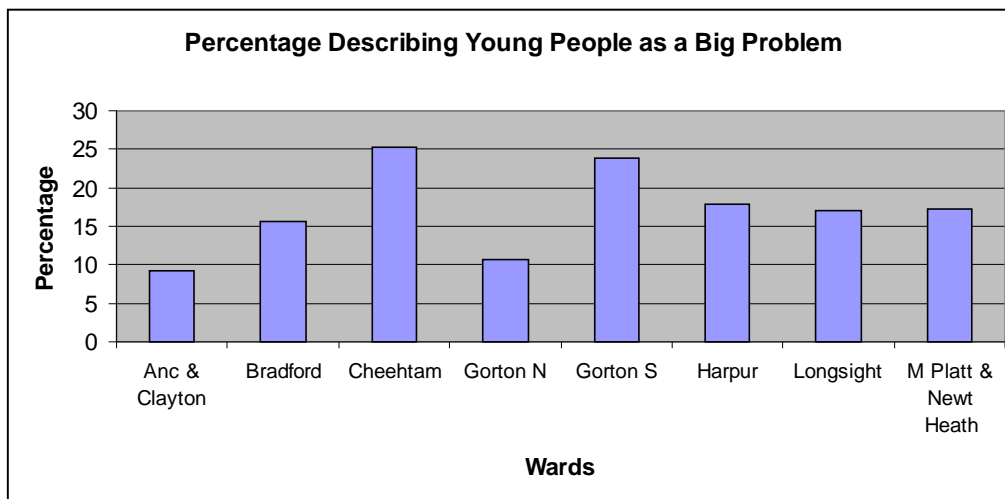


**Figure 4.8: Ward Comparison: percentage of people describing drunk or rowdy behaviour as a big problem (Source: Manchester City Council Quality of Life Survey 2004)**



In addition, concern about and tackling youth nuisance seems to be making an impact as demonstrated by Figure 4.9. All other wards, with the exception of North Gorton perceive young people as more problematic than in East Manchester.

**Figure 4.9: Ward Comparison: percentage of people describing young people as a big problem (Source: Manchester City Council Quality of Life Survey 2004)**



This is supported by police statistics which report that in Area Police Team 5 (including Ancoats/Clayton wards) and in Area Police Team 6 (Bradford Ward), youth nuisance has decreased 10% and 16% respectively (source, statistics supplied by NDC Community Safety Officer)

Whilst these changes cannot be attributed wholly to the work of the EMNNT, these statistics taken alongside the following stakeholder comments (as well as those

discussed elsewhere in the report) suggest it will have made an important contribution:

*Actually crime is a lot less than we used to have, but the fear of crime is still there. It'll be there for a long time to come, but when you see the difference in people nowadays to what it was 5 years ago, it's absolutely tremendous. I've got one old man who used to come to the meetings, and then he stopped because he was threatened, and then I met him, he was going for a pint of milk. And he said I've escaped, I'm not frightened anymore of going to the shops. To me that's, you've won a battle there. (Resident 1)*

*Lots of people tell us that 3 years ago they wouldn't have walked across Beswick Precinct on their own. I've been out in the evening and I've seen old ladies walking across Beswick Precinct on their own. 3 years ago that would have never ever have happened, people would have felt far too unsafe to do that. So I think we're giving back, people are beginning to actually see some results of what we've been doing, that they are feeling safer, and I think we've got to look long-term here to the community and if we're getting people of 70 years old feeling safe walking out, we'll get people of 30 years old feeling safe and walking out. So I think we've made a massive impact. (Team Leader)*

*I think its probably built confidence a little within the community. It's supporting witnesses, cause that's obviously been an issue for some people, the fear of retribution. And I think in some figures, it has reduced, or has contributed to the reduction of crime and the fear of crime, as long as with another number of agencies. Working with other agencies to add to improvement, and sense of hope within the area. (Housing Officer 1)*

#### **4.6. Stakeholder satisfaction (partners, families, agencies)**

Different stakeholders are involved with the work of the neighbourhood nuisance team, however information about satisfaction with the service is not collected in a systematic way, although a stakeholder survey was undertaken early in 2005.

Some feedback is gained through attending the Local Area Partnership meetings. However, sometimes concerns raised with the team are misattributed:

*Attend Local Area partnership and residents there who want to have their say. Sometimes they use it as a sounding board just to make a general complaint and when you get down to the bare bones of what they're taking about, they're not talking about that we haven't done anything, they're just generally dissatisfied with what's going on. When we leave ourselves open to those kinds of forums we do get general criticism. When its more one to one or smaller meetings I think that people, that people generally do think we are working well - they're happy with the service... If they're not they let us know when they phone up. Because we're so accessible they just come up and tell us what they think of what we're doing. (Team member)*

Whilst almost certainly many perpetrators will feel antagonistic towards the team with their enforcement function, some parents of young people causing nuisance have expressed gratitude for the help they been given:

*I got a brilliant response (when I phoned up). I took him in for an ASBO warning. She said to me 'Do you want to go to town with him?' I said 'yes'. It did the job. He stayed away from the lad he was involved with. He didn't want the police around. He's even said 'Mam, I'm sorry for hanging about with the wrong ones, and that the police know all about it'. (Mother of teenage son keeping bad company)*

*We're all trying to prevent an ASBO. The team (member) has attended meetings. She's set us up with all sorts. The family support come every day. I wouldn't say anything against them. (Parent of teenage son causing considerable nuisance)*

The Police too as major stakeholders in the team's work have identified the value of the team:

*In general support has been gained from helpful staff who continually seek to offer and assist in queries referring to joint agency work. The team has proven to be a valuable service for other agencies such as the police. (Police officer, survey feedback)*

However, one police officer expressed some reservations with follow through activities:

*(Manager) does a fantastic job in leading the team. Absolutely no problems with her. I have less faith in (team member) and their enthusiasm for the role. There have been incidents at the meetings where no replies to previous actions have been given; and one particular incident where action in my view could be justified and was not taken. (Police officer, survey feedback)*

It is not known whether this was raised directly with the team or not.

In the feedback survey a housing manager identified the potential for further skill development across the agencies, a warden suggested that feedback could be improved, and a youth intervention officer unequivocally supported the way the team worked:

*Need to develop skills and competencies within my team and yours and time will improve joint working (RSL manager, survey feedback)*

*Feedback role could be improved (Warden survey feedback)*

*The team are supportive of early intervention. Their work is dedicated, professional and of the highest quality (YIO, survey feedback)*

#### **4.7. Capacity Building**

The team has worked to develop knowledge and skills in other organisations. For example, housing officers still deal with substantial amounts of low level nuisance. Training has been given on new legislation to partner agencies, as well as with more specific actions. The working of letters can be crucial in attempts to address problems at source:

*The team has done training for our stakeholders, housing officers, in terms of how to manage the initial case load of nuisance... in terms of the specific warning letter that you send in the early stages so that you've got something of more substance if they pass it on to the nuisance team and you want to take action. Because you need to satisfy the court that you've actually given proper warning about the anti-social behaviour and they're aware that they were causing a problem.. (Team member)*

The development of partnership working and relationships with the police has had an effect in changing how information is communicated:

*The information sharing with the police. It's better in the sense that they give us what we need now, rather than not giving us anything at all, or giving us bits and pieces because they weren't sure how much information to give us. They give us targeted pieces of information that they know we can actually deal with. Next stage you'd go to a tasking meeting and be told someone had been burgled. It was completely irrelevant why they were telling the nuisance team or asking us to do a follow up visit. It was a case of 'no, this isn't what we do' this is the way we operate and this is what we can do to assist. That's improved. (Team member)*

Partnership working has affected agencies in other ways. Not only have they gained knowledge, but also increased in willingness to discuss dilemmas with the team members:



*Agencies may have changed the way they have dealt with nuisance, knowing what we're about. So we're a point of reference, rather than a case of 'well I'll write a letter', it might be 'well I'll check with the neighbourhood nuisance team' cos we can get a quick call for some quick advice. Or if they're in here, they might bob upstairs and come and see us, or someone may give us a quick call and 'will you just check this letter for me'. So they may have changed their thought process to involve us more, or even in the case of their direct experience with us, may have helped focus their mind in a different way. In so far as 'well I had this problem last time the neighbourhood nuisance team helped me and we did this, so if I just follow that road again, that will be the way forward'. (Team member)*

Team members suggested that not only had RSLs benefited, but also private landlords, insofar as the establishment of the EMLIS (East Manchester landlord Information Service), which arose alongside the work of the team:

*EMLIS... It's very useful for private landlords as they're not on the housing register. EMLIS was set up to get a free information service for landlords to our NDC area. Basically to stop tenants moving around in the private sector. Before the new act came into force we had much less power against people who were perpetrating anti-social behaviour if they weren't a council tenant or a RSL tenant. Its kind of like a vetting process. It's not a blacklisting process. Its just to make sure if you've had a tenant that has been causing nuisance or has got an anti-social behaviour history in addition to the criminal conviction they're supposed to declare when they fill in their form, any new landlord who's registered with the service can get that information from EMLIS... it lets the landlord decide whether they want to take the risk of having them in their property or not, and perhaps getting a bond before they do put them in the property. We're dealing with some people who get evicted from a council property and just move into the private sector. And it's just a cycle of anti-social behaviour then. You evict, them or they abandon their property then move somewhere else. Then 6 months later exactly the same problem starts again and you have start building a new case file or the landlord isn't interested because it's not a good landlord... If we know we have a bad landlord we pass it on. (Team member)*

This was mirrored in the comments received by the RSLs themselves, as well as the residents' perceptions of RSL housing officers' method of working:

*They bring the experience and knowledge, and the service over the years really, they clearly brought an experience and dealing with crime and antisocial behaviour that the rest of us didn't have. And I think in some degree we're much better placed and skilled ourselves to deal with things, on the back of things that we've learnt through dealing with that. That's from drawing up a witness statement to building capacity of staff and confidence really to tackle things. (Housing Officer 1)*

*I think I'm grateful for having had their expertise at hand, and one of their roles is to work with partners and their officers to raise, you know help us raise our skills and confidence in dealing with neighbour nuisance. I feel we're a lot, I feel I compare my team to other teams across the RSL and I certainly feel that my team gain, have you know significantly more confidence in areas than other officers because of their ongoing relationship with skilled practitioners who will take the time to talk through cases and work through cases with them. And over the year we've had briefings from the team, we've more recently started to do more injunctions and that sort of thing, and its been good to have the nuisance team involved in that so we can learn from them. (Housing Officer 2)*

*A lot of the, a lot of the housing officers of these different agencies didn't know how to go about, but neighbourhood nuisance team have actually trained most of their staff on how to deal with neighbour nuisance, which is half the battle. They know how to go about filling in right forms, and how to go about it, and what questions to ask and whatever else. That was all through neighbourhood nuisance team doing courses for them, so its made a very very big impact on people in this area. (Resident 1)*

Similarly, the youth intervention team has developed alongside the neighbourhood nuisance team, and this too has had an impact on the police:

*...youth intervention, they stem from our team. Youth intervention is something that the two officers that cover our area work really closely with us, doing joint warning interviews. It's changed the way the police have worked. I've mentioned stop and search before - they pass information to the youth intervention officer directly and they have clearance to set up meetings in the police station to give warnings that way. It's like an extended arm of the law. (Team member)*

#### **4.8. Sources of satisfaction**

Sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction within the team lie in how the team works and the impact it has had. One team member talked about the importance of knowing that their work had contributed to positive change:

*Knowing made a difference. Made something a little bit better for someone. They speak to us. Problem resolved. May be a simple phone call. We get a lot of thanks from people - for all the time and for the help. Even if you don't do anything, just the fact that you've sat and listened to them. Some people must want reassurance. (Team member)*

The early intervention work means that relationships are built up over a long period of time with local people and this, too, makes the work worthwhile:

*Enjoy having a long term relationship, developing trust, its also like a bit of a challenge - they come to you and they're really really fed up, what can you do for them? You try and get them back on board, win their confidence, keep communicating with them and then you start to exceed - or at least meet them, their expectations of you. I enjoy the case work and the resolution. (Team member)*

However, the reactions of people, whilst also sources of satisfaction, can be what makes the work stressful:

*Sometimes you don't need the abuse. Some complainants or perpetrators. Some day you just don't need the grief. Other days you think that's just part of the job and see next time... (Team member)*

Different priorities between agencies, even though the team has good partnership working, can be frustrating:

*Frustration. Lack of support form other agencies - social services, police. It's perception - they don't perceive something to be as important as we do as we're dealing with directly, there and then. Things like the Local Tasking Meetings help resolve the perception. (Team member)*

## **5. Future Prospects**

### **5.1. Fear of regression to high levels of disorder and fear**

The team is proud of its record in preventing escalation of neighbour nuisance so that court actions are required. There is some concern that when the funding and arrangements cease, the team will be required to work in less preventive, and more enforcement ways. This will, it is believed, contribute to worsening levels of perceived community safety and increased levels of more severe nuisance. If the team were not able to maintain its early intervention stance, team members consider there would be a resultant greater pressure on housing officers, who would not be able to cope:

*Nuisance would go back in general duties of housing officers and escalate. They are busy enough with being housing officers and can't devote time necessary and also don't have the skills or resources - they're stressed out as it is. (Team member)*

If this happened, problems would escalate and harder action would need to be taken, as is thought to be the case with the City team:

*Manchester's record for taking so many ASBOs is basically cos housing officers are so overstretched. They couldn't deal with anti-social behaviour before it got to the stage where it needed legal action so there's been no early intervention. Perhaps if some of those people with ASBOs, if they'd been tackled a year, 6 months before, then the problem could have been resolved, without it having to get that far. If this team isn't here, people will be suffering anti-social behaviour longer than they need to. And then they'll end up having to go to court. In some cases so many people don't want to go to court, they don't want to give a statement to the police - they don't phone the police at all, they may never come forward. They'll just leave the area and the problem that East Manchester had initially in 1999 is that people are going to be abandoning their properties, moving out of the area. And cos they don't want to stay here as there's too much anti-social behaviour, property values go down and you're just back to square one. (Team member)*

Furthermore the locality would lose the momentum generated by the progress and achievements of the EMNNT:

*The thing that worries me is that we'll lose the funding. Because if we lose what we've got up here now, god knows it'll go back to square one again. So we need someone to back us. (Resident 1)*

*It's got to be done, and its got to be kept here. To lose it would be a travesty of bloody justice it would. (Resident 1)*

*Massive disadvantage for us is this funding issue that if the staff cannot be employed, the service can't be delivered, and its taken us 5 or 6 years to get here, and we're going straight back down. (Team Leader)*

## **5.2. Uncertainty and destabilisation – turnover**

Whilst the future of the team is uncertain, there is the danger that the team will become destabilised as turnover increases again. This joint concern is expressed by both steering group members and RSL partners:

*We're losing good officers now because they haven't got the confidence that the money will be available – so they're on like 12 months contracts waiting for more money to come, so its unstabilised the team... But it is unnerving, they're snowed under with work and I just think the issue of funding is one of the things that's like an axe over their heads all the time. (Resident 2)*

*I think its affected the amount of knowledge and skills that the team can retain. I think they've been held back over the last 2 years by having to bring new people on, often from jobs where they got not as much as experience as the ones that are leaving. They haven't managed to find and recruit skilled nuisance case managers... which wasn't the case a couple of years ago. It just means there's a bit of a lull, and kind of given me a little bit of concern about the you know, the experience really of officers that need to be making decisions very quickly about which way to take a case, and how to deal with a case, and how to deal with a particular incident that blows up that may require instant response. But I mean I guess that happens in all teams to some extent, so its natural in a sense, but they've lost practically their whole, they've had a whole turnover of staff in the past 12 months or 18 months. But the people that they've got in have done really well, they've had good people, they've found good people, but there's an impact from that turnover. I dunno whether that is just about the funding, or management. (Housing Officer 2)*

*Strengths (of the team) are how localised it is, and the knowledge of the area that you get, and the working relationship between the officers. One of the issues we had was that there's been a change in staffing, so people who are used to working with certain officers and the manager, that relationship then broke down and its sort of taken time to re-establish really. There's been a change in staff and that's not kind of got out to every officer, and they're not sure who deals with what now. (Housing Officer 3)*

### **5.3. Promotion of the East Manchester neighbourhood nuisance model of intervention**

The success of the teams lies in the collective accumulation of benefits obtained through its various processes and mechanisms of working. At the heart of this is its resident lead focus, its emphasis on partnership and collaboration, and the coordination achieved through multi-agency working. This has holistically provided a bespoke service for the community, forming a strategic weapon against anti-social behaviour rather than a reactive response:

*I think it has been very successful. I think it was set out however many years ago it was, with a clear objective, with a strategy, and an ideological outlook on challenging and reducing or tackling at least neighbourhood nuisance – which is different to the ideological approach that central team has adopted. So I think to some extent they've proved that their approach works, in that they've had lots of successes. I hope it'll come out of this survey that most people feel that their approach works for partners, but also for the community. (Housing Officer 2)*

*I'm proud of the work they (the team) have done, I'm proud of the way they do their work so that when they get to court all the 't's are crossed and we don't get that many throw out by court. They're very thorough in what they do. I just can't praise them highly enough for the work that they've been doing in this area, I really can't. (Resident 2)*

For this success to continue and further develop, there needs to be promotion of the success and the model of working outside East Manchester, in the city and beyond. This is a realistic prospect which was recognised by respondents in the review, who agreed that the work of the EMNNT should be highlighted as a national example of best practice:

*I think they could've done more to perhaps sell what they're doing elsewhere in the city, I'm surprised that they haven't done, given that we all feel it's a success in East Manchester, I'm surprised its not reflected elsewhere. My impression is from talking to other people, that there's not a great deal of awareness that the team even exists outside East Manchester in the City council, but possibly in other housing associations, that sort of thing as well. They could've sold the model, it could've prompted other areas, other housing association sort of partnerships to start up other teams elsewhere. (Housing Officer 2)*

*We need to try and raise profile outside of East Manchester. I don't think it's recognised or understood our different ways of working that are more effective. If you look at us in terms of legal output, then we don't seem to be doing much. In terms of case load we have, we do a vast amount of work. There's all different areas. We've got a really good relationship with the police and our residents. (Team member)*

Three people from different agencies responding to the feedback questionnaire issued in May 2005 suggested that in the future, *expansion* of the team would bring in more referrals and lead to more positive action.

## **6. Conclusion**

### **6.1. Success in being at the cutting edge of tackling neighbour nuisance**

When it began, the EMNNT's emphasis on early intervention, partnership working, community development and ready access was cutting edge and innovative at a time when ASBOs were being introduced. Since then, the Government has continued to hail ASBOs and other enforcement strategies as probably the most important key to their tackling anti-social behaviour. There is beginning to develop a critical literature on the impact of ASBOs and enforcement approaches, both in terms of the criminological logic underlying them (Brown, 2004) and their efficacy, particularly for juveniles. (Armitage, 2002; Burney, 2005; CAA, 2005; Morgan, 2005; Taylor & Jerron, 2005; Willow, 2005). It is imperative that the social and economic benefits of preventive and early intervention approaches are clarified.

The EMNNT has retained its emphasis on early intervention, and some of the ways it has done this have been outlined in this report. The way it has put into practice the

key aspects of a preventive approach to neighbour nuisance which characterised how the team was established, are exemplary. It has dealt with a high proportion of nuisance behaviour before it escalates into serious and enduring problems needing court actions. It has persisted with court actions when all other interventions have failed with a small number of perpetrators, or the seriousness of the nuisance warranted it. It has contributed to community development via the attention it pays to helping residents become aware of what is, and is not nuisance behaviour and to community confidence and increasing community safety. It has stimulated the effective operation of good, multi-agency partnerships and has influenced how other agencies concerned with neighbour nuisance work. There is a high level of satisfaction with the work of the team from different stakeholders.

## 6.2. Recommendations

Whilst the number of ASBOs, or other court actions, provide simple metrics for the efficacy of a neighbour nuisance team, other criteria will be required to demonstrate the efficacy of an early intervention process. It has not been easy to establish which parts of the early intervention and prevention process have what kind of impact. This is, in part, due to the form in which monitoring data is collected. This, in turn, makes it difficult to quantify the value of the service and its working methods. Jarvis (2003) recommended that *the EMNNT, working with the steering group, agree and develop a tool that will quantify the value of the service received* (p.17). This would still be useful, not just as a means of estimating cost effectiveness, which should be clearly identified, but strengthening the information about the effectiveness of different stages of early intervention. **Recommendation: Develop a set of indicators which will enable the monitoring and evaluation of the efficacy of early intervention steps (including the costs) to tackling neighbour nuisance.**

In this review we have tried to understand the process of early intervention and the underlying model of nuisance behaviour resolution. It seems that there is an implicit model being used, but this is not made explicit in publications. It would be useful, for any future comparisons with other methods of working for a clear description of the process of early intervention and the role that partnerships play in this to be developed. **Recommendation: Produce a description of the early intervention process and how both agency partnerships and citizen involvement contribute to this.**

During the course of the review, it became clear that whilst partner agency feedback was sought, there was little systematic collection of feedback information from communities (via their representatives), complainants or perpetrators. Yet, some of this type of information is capable of providing strong endorsement of the team's work, as well as facilitating learning for continual improvement. Some feedback is, of course, received through the everyday work of the team. However, a more organised collection of client satisfaction information would strengthen the team's work, enabling them both to understand what works and why, and to identify where improvements in the processes used might be made. **Recommendation: Collect feedback information in an organised way from communities, complainants and perpetrators.**

The ideological context nationally, in large part due to the ways the press cover responses to anti-social behaviour, celebrates hard enforcement approaches to anti-

social behaviour. Local press coverage makes little specific mention of alternative responses. Whilst the approach adopted and the work of the EMNNT might be well known in the locality and be firmly embedded in community involvement in dealing with nuisance and disorder, wider dissemination of the approach and its benefits, to individuals, families, communities and authorities, would be useful. The EMNNT is well placed to ensure press coverage of early intervention successes.

**Recommendation: Increase press releases and journalistic coverage of non-court action outcomes at different stages of early intervention.**

A large proportion of the EMNNT's work is linked to the private sector. The NDC funding stream into the team's work will cease in April 2006. Work will be needed to look at options for further funding which reflect the balance of the team's work. Any future funding mechanism will need to be flexible in order to incorporate the rapid developments in housing and the proportion of different kinds of housing in the locality. **Recommendation: Develop a flexible framework for funding the team which reflects the balance of work undertaken by the team.**

The close working between the youth intervention officers is a strength of the team's work in relation to young people. A review is being undertaken of that role, and it will be important to clarify how the two teams will continue to work effectively in the future. The team also works closely with the Neighbourhood Wardens. Although we were unable to collect detailed information on agencies' and residents' understanding of the two roles, there appeared to be some potential for confusion. As external reviewers, it was not clear what the boundaries between wardens and response officers were. This could usefully be clarified, especially as the resources available to the team will be under review in the future. **Recommendation: Identify human, as well as financial resources available to the team in the future, and in particular the overlapping role boundaries of response officers and community wardens.**

The innovative and successful nature of the team, in terms of how it works and the results it has achieved, not just in tackling anti-social behaviour, but also in capacity building for agencies and communities, is validated by reports from stakeholders as well as from improving community safety statistics. The risk of deteriorating community safety and increased nuisance behaviours if the team were to compromise an early intervention approach are great. **Recommendation: The team should continue with its emphasis and experience in early intervention for tackling anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance for the foreseeable future.**



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## Useful Websites

- [www.Crimereduction.gov.uk](http://www.Crimereduction.gov.uk)  
[www.together.gov.uk/hme.asp](http://www.together.gov.uk/hme.asp)