

these strengthened the case for the ASBOs at the full hearing.

Witnesses who were previously fearful of giving evidence were willing to do so at the full hearing where the ASBOs were granted, and an ISO was attached to each ASBO to tackle some of the underlying causes of the behaviour.

The conditions of the ASBOs on the five boys ordered them:

- not to cause nuisance within the vicinity of their dwellings;
- to stop knocking on doors and windows; and
- not to play games on the balcony.

Outcome

The main benefit of the ASBOs was the relief that they brought to the neighbours, who felt they had been supported through the process by police and the housing office.

The ISO, devised and facilitated by Norfolk Youth Offending Team, consisted of four hour-long sessions aimed at helping the boys develop an understanding of how their anti-social behaviour, their constant shouting and banging, impacted on themselves as a group, on their immediate family, and on their neighbours.

The first session defined the ground rules for the group, including showing respect, listening with only one person talking at a time, no shouting, and with each member

being allowed to voice an opinion. The second session got the boys listening to what people were saying around them. The third session introduced elements from a social skills game that focused on the boys' finding different ways of asking each other something without resorting to shouting. In the fourth session, a worker from Positive Futures helped the boys think about what leisure activities were available as alternatives to playing on the balcony. The youth worker kept the boys' parents up to date on what was happening in the sessions.

Family X, who were relocated away from family Y, kept their tenancy and no further problems were reported. Similarly, family Y succeeded in stopping their anti-social behaviour.

The ISO gave the boys an opportunity to understand the effect of their rowdy behaviour on themselves and others. As a result of the order and the interventions of the youth worker, the boys took up recreational activities and found constructive ways of spending their time.

Overall, the intervention package was a great success for the community, and for the families themselves.

Contact

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In a debate in the House of Commons on 28 June, Vernon Coaker MP, a Home Office Minister, said:

"ISOs are playing their part in the wider battle to combat anti-social behaviour and promote positive behaviour. They have proven potential to help young people to turn around their lives and move away from anti-social behaviour and offending. I share the enthusiasm for ISOs of my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport, and I hope that she and the other hon. Members will encourage local agencies to make more use of such a highly effective intervention tool."