

Case Studies

Case 1 - gangs

Background Summary

In the summer of 2011, the activity of the Grey Bandana Gang (GBG) came to the attention Slough Borough Council and Thames Valley Police, following several incidents of public disorder and robberies. The gang have been involved in a spate of serious robberies on trains, and also in incidents in Beaconsfield, the Marlow Regatta and other summer fairs, when GBG fought with other gangs from the surrounding towns in the area.

Circumstances Leading to Action (and action taken)

Monthly meetings were held from June 2011, involving (amongst others) TVP, Slough Borough Council, Youth Offending Teams, housing providers and schools to discuss the members of the GBG. Four members were identified as being the target for enforcement action, as they were believed to be the most involved in the activities; as such Gang Injunctions were pursued against the main four, which would include conditions preventing association with one another, use of threatening behaviour, and travelling to certain areas, which were all linked to the activity of the GBG as a whole.

In April 2012, an interim Gang Injunction was made against the four main members, pending the Court making a full Gang Injunction; during this time, the individuals would be bound by the conditions, unless they were varied, or revoked by the Court. In November 2012, the full Gang Injunctions were made, incorporating preventative conditions, but also supportive conditions, such as to attend anger management courses operated by Youth Offending Team or Probation (as appropriate for their age). The Injunctions prohibited association with a large number of known individuals linked to the GBG.

Police and Youth Service visited the areas frequented by the GBG to engage with them in an attempt to divert them to positive activities.

Severity of Offence & Previous History

The GBG had obtained a reputation as a violent and intimidating gang, and there were reports to Police that associating with the GBG was attractive to certain individuals. There were frequent reports of robberies and theft associated with the GBG, and also reports of large congregations, which had an intimidating effect on the public. The GBG had travelled to High Wycombe in January 2012, to fight with another gang; this resulted in a member of the GBG being shot (non-fatal, but life altering). As a result of the shooting, concerns were raised that reprisals could occur, either within Slough, or High Wycombe, although fortunately this did not materialise, although the victim of the shooting and his family were actively intimidated.

Public Benefit & Importance of Case

The Gang Injunctions for the four main individuals will prevent the intimidating nature of the GBG, and will disrupt the criminal activity, as there are conditions of non-association, restrictions on travel, being in a group of more than 3 people, and other conditions to curtail undesirable behaviour. The public will benefit from feeling safe, as the GBG will not be able to collect in large numbers, act aggressively or travel to certain areas; therefore the risk of being a victim of crime is reduced, and the feeling of safety will increase.

This was the first time Slough had applied for Gang Injunctions, as they were a relatively new tool available to tackle gang activity, so the successful application for four Gang Injunctions could lead to a greater use of this tool in the future.

Alternative Options to enforcement action

Police, Youth Offending Team, Youth Service and schools made attempts to engage with the individuals, and divert them away from gang activities. Those individuals who were social housing tenants were warned by their housing providers that criminal and antisocial behaviour close to the vicinity of their address could affect their tenancy. The attempted interventions were not effective, and the unacceptable behaviour continued, and despite the interim Gang Injunctions being imposed in April 2012, when the four individuals were aware of what was expected of them, they continued to associate with the GBG and were actively involved in the negative activities.

Case study 2 – ASB and noise

Background Summary

A lone female lived in a first floor maisonette, and her neighbour in the flat below repeatedly slammed his front door, and internal doors, as well as causing loud bangs, playing loud music, and shouting at her in retaliation for any noise she made in her daily activities (which were entirely reasonable), such as walking across the floor, and using her washing machine during the day. The perpetrator was also verbally abusive to the victim when outside. This behaviour endured for over 18 months, with only short periods of respite.

Circumstances Leading to Action (and action taken)

The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team were involved due to the noise nuisance, and a noise abatement notice was imposed, at which point he received a warning that that further excessive noise would lead to prosecution. Unfortunately, due to the short duration of each episode, the incidents were not successfully witnessed for several months, as the noise would invariably cease prior to an environmental health officer being able to attend. On one occasion, the noise was witnessed by Police officers, and this was sufficient to prosecute for breach of the noise abatement notice. Following the prosecution at Court, an ASBO was imposed, which prevented the perpetrator from making sustained noise at his address, and using abusive language or intimidating the victim or her visitors; the ASBO was imposed for a 2 year period.

The ASB Victims' Champion was able to support the victim at Court, and provided an impact statement for the Court, which avoided the victim needing to speak in Court.

Severity of Offence & Previous History

The behaviour against the victim had been ongoing for 18 months, and had an impact on her welfare, as it was occurring where she lived. The victim lived alone, and felt particularly vulnerable due to the intimidating behaviour displayed towards her.

Action taken by Individual to Correct Matters (if any)

The victim had initially attempted to address the issues by herself, by approaching the neighbour and attempting to discuss a resolution; the neighbour was aggressive and intimidating, and was not prepared to curtail his behaviour, in fact he stated that was responding to the noise she made, and stated that she was at fault. The victim also purchased new carpet and sound insulating underlay, at her own expense, to attempt to reduce the noise that she made in her daily routine, but this did not improve matters and the aggressive reactions continued.

Public Benefit & Importance of Case

The imposition of the ASBO will give protection to anyone who occupies the victim's property, or visits as a guest for a 2 year period. The ASBO will remind the perpetrator that his behaviour was unacceptable, and should lead to an improvement in behaviour; in fact since the ASBO was imposed, there has been a great improvement in behaviour, and he no longer makes excessive noise to intimidate or cause

nuisance.

Alternative Options to enforcement action

Mediation between the parties was attempted to find a resolution; however, the perpetrator was initially unwilling to engage, and subsequently the perpetrator's behaviour deteriorated to the point that the victim did not wish to be in his company for any period of time. The perpetrator had been warned, by the environmental health officer, and Police whenever they visited, that the behaviour was unacceptable, and if it continued could result in prosecution. The perpetrator did not heed the warnings, and continued with the behaviour, resulting in Court action.