

Tackling Antisocial Behaviour

Knowledge Exchange Webinar

Since the beginning of 2025 the Scottish Police Authority has been hosting a developing series of knowledge exchange events.

Our first topical webinar on 29th May 2025 – on the theme of tackling antisocial behaviour – was supported by colleagues from the Scottish Community Safety Network. During the session we interrogated what we know, or think we know, about the current picture on antisocial behaviour in Scotland in terms of both current data trends, public opinion and its strategic positioning within the partnership landscape. We also explored the findings and recommendations from the recently commissioned [Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour in Scotland](#), looking specifically at questions around data and information sharing and the need for national strategic governance.

The webinar concluded with a look at two policing case studies from Scotland, each with a seasonal flavour: the Safer Shores intervention in Ayrshire, and Operation Respect in Inverness.



Webinar Outline

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| 1.00pm | Introductions
Dr Jennifer Galbraith, Scottish Police Authority
Dave Shea, Scottish Community Safety Network |
| 1.05pm | Data Insights on Antisocial Behaviour in Scotland
Martin Smith, Scottish Police Authority |
| 1.30pm | Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour: main findings and recommendations
Lorraine Gillies, Independent Freelance Consultant
Professor Fiona Dyer, University of Strathclyde |
| 1.55pm | Case Studies from Scotland

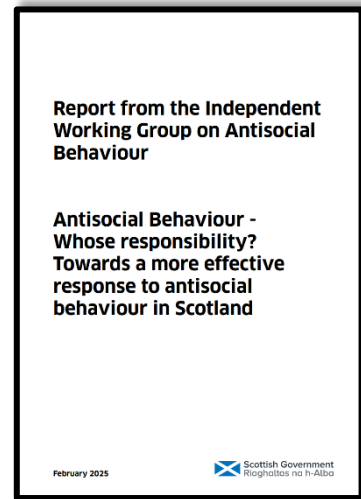
Safer Shores, Ayrshire
Superintendent Jim MacMillan, Police Scotland

Operation Respect, Inverness
Inspector Emma Wright, Police Scotland |
| 2.30pm | Event Close |

Key Messages from the Webinar

A number of key messages and discussion points formed the overall focus of the webinar, summarised as follows:

- The [report](#) published by the Independent Working Group (IWG) has provided some valuable, independent clarity on antisocial behaviour to inform discussion and next steps.
- The data picture on antisocial behaviour in Scotland is rich yet disparate, owing to the numerous ways in which antisocial behaviour is experienced, defined and reported. A systematic review of data sources and analytical arrangements from around the country would be a welcome development.
- From the data known to be available regarding prevalence, it can be inferred that antisocial behaviour has been reducing over the last two decades albeit (1) there was an uptick in reported antisocial behaviour between 2020-2022 linked to COVID-19 and (2) underreporting is likely to be playing a role in exaggerating the scale of reduction, although the reasons for underreporting are not very well understood.
- In practice there is no definitive measure of antisocial behaviour and it may be equally productive to reframe the effort to 'tackle antisocial behaviour' instead as the aspiration to further 'promote pro-social behaviour', in recognition that the evidence base (and public opinion) is supportive of investing in preventative, upstream interventions rather than repeating a cycle of reactive, short-term, punitive measures.
- In terms of prioritising the suggested actions contained within the IWG report, establishment of a national oversight group to provide good governance would be beneficial. There would also be merit in reviewing existing local authority strategies on antisocial behaviour.
- In relation to good practice examples, both the example from Ayrshire and Inverness highlighted the importance of partnership working; intelligence sharing and risk assessment; a focus on creating safe, positive spaces for people; clear and regular engagement and communication with communities; focussing on harm, vulnerability and safeguarding.



Presentation Slide Deck

The four presentations given at the webinar can be accessed in PDF form from the Scottish Police Authority [website](#).