

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES WORKING GROUP

13 December 2018

PART A : REPORT

SUBJECT: Community Safety and Housing Partnership Working Review 2016 - 2018

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PORTFOLIO AREA: Community Wellbeing

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report sets out the integrated working and achievements of the Arun District Council Community Safety and Housing teams between 2016 / 18. It provides information to enable Members to understand performance to date and provides a summary assessment of the future challenges and opportunities for cross departmental working.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Housing and Customer Service Working Group recommends to Cabinet:

1. The integrated working between the Council's Community Safety and Housing team is endorsed and the importance of partnership working in contributing to reducing anti-social behaviour, creating safe environments and addressing Street Community issues is recognised.
2. That recognition is given to the work of Community Safety, Housing and the Safer Arun Partnership in contributing to the delivery of the Council's strategic priority "supporting people in our district who need our help" and "serving our communities well by delivering the best services we can afford".

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This paper sets out the key joint activities and achievements of Arun's Community Safety and Housing teams during the period 2016 – 2018. Its purpose is to gain an understanding of the partnership work undertaken both strategically and operationally between the two teams and common strands of work.

- 1.2. The joint working outlined in this report is directed through the priorities set by the Safer Arun Partnership (SAP) as outlined in its partnership plan; a strategic document that sets out the vision and priorities over the five year period 2017 - 2022. The plan is annually reviewed and refreshed through evidenced information that describes and evaluates the known and emerging crime and disorder patterns in Arun (the Arun Strategic Intelligence Assessment).
- 1.3. SAP partners are committed to the following vision:
- “To work in partnership to proactively and reactively reduce the risk of harm and vulnerability associated with crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour for identified individuals, communities and neighbourhoods”***
- 1.4. In order to achieve the vision, SAP agreed the following 2018/19 strategic priorities that encourage and support joint working between Community Safety and Housing:
- Tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour
 - Street Communities
 - Serious and Organised Crime with a specific focus on ‘Cuckooing’
 - Neighbourhood Development
- 1.5. The daily core business of the Community Safety team reflected in the SAP priorities overlaps in several areas with the Housing team’s core business. Partnership working between both departments is essential to provide an effective and timely service to residents utilising each other’s expertise. This report will highlight where there has been joint work against each of these priorities over the last two years. It will facilitate scrutiny of performance and required improvements to meet future challenges.

2. TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

KEY OUTCOMES

- *Reduce identified risk of harm for victims as quickly as possible*
 - *Provide timely support for all victims of anti-social behaviour*
 - *Focus on increasing reporting and reducing re-offending*
- 2.1. The Arun District Council Anti-social behaviour (ASB) Team, situated within Community Safety comprises of a Senior ASB Caseworker, two ASB Caseworkers, who deliver district wide interventions and a Housing ASB Caseworker, whose role is to provide dedicated support to Council tenants. Working as a holistic team, they provide targeted intervention to tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour and support for victims. They facilitate and co-ordinate partnership involvement in cases when required to resolve cases e.g. police, probation, children’s services, drug and alcohol treatment.
- 2.2. The Anti-social behaviour (ASB) Team continue to achieve a less than 5% re-offending rate (consistent since 2007) working with key partners.

- 2.3. 2016-17 saw Arun District Council ASB Caseworkers work with 367 individual perpetrators of nuisance in their communities and 245 in 2017-18. Over the two performance years an average of 97% success rate has been achieved in effectively reducing and stopping anti-social behaviour by identified perpetrators in Arun local communities. Please refer to Appendix 1 for detailed information.
- 2.4. From April 2017 to September 2018, the Housing ASB Caseworker worked with 93 council tenants who perpetrated ASB versus 328 individuals worked with by the two ASB Caseworkers (mean of 164 individuals per caseworker). Furthermore the Housing ASB caseworker issued 25 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC) to formally manage problematic tenant behaviour versus 10 ABC's issued by the ASB Caseworkers. These variances highlight that the nature and type of interventions required are specific to tenure, suggesting that for the Council's tenants, where duties and responsibilities are increased, that intensive management is required to effectively manage ASB. This is in contrast to community ASB responses where opportunities for short and sharp early interventions can be progressed by ASB Caseworkers and consequently, are less intensive meaning that a higher volume of activity can be achieved. Furthermore, that the thresholds for justifying tenancy action tend to require formal evidence and may explain why the Housing ASB Caseworker more frequently utilises ABC's to gather accurate information to progress tenancy breaches.
- 2.5. *Key partnership achievements for the ASB and Housing teams include:*
- 2.5.1. Joint working practices have been embedded in core day to day business activities in response to ASB reports. These include: joint Acceptable Behaviour Contracts; co-ordinating multi-agency meetings (MAMs) to resolve complex cases; for Housing stock, installing and reviewing CCTV to capture evidence to pursue enforcement actions; supporting successful mutual exchanges and where required managed moves; issuing Notice Of Seeking Possession (NOSPs) and although infrequent, evictions where necessary to protect residents and wider community.
- 2.5.2. The ASB and Neighbourhood Housing Teams with supporting statements from Sussex Police successfully obtained six partial Closure Orders in Littlehampton and Bognor for Council properties between December 2017 and August 2018. The rationale for these enforcements was to reduce the high risk of harm to the tenants and local community from drug activity (cuckooing – section 4.2). These have had a positive impact and have helped the Council to manage complex tenant behaviours and behaviours whilst sustaining tenancies.
- 2.5.3. The ASB team regularly hold joint meetings with the Housing Options team to scope and agree preventative interventions that can be put in place prior to known individuals approaching the council as homeless. This has the net effect of reducing demand on statutory homelessness services and sustainably addressing problematic behaviours.

- 2.5.4. The ASB team now receive weekly temporary accommodation information from Housing and can schedule in early intervention visits as necessary for known problematic tenants to reduce escalation of issues.
- 2.5.5. The Housing ASB caseworker attends both Community Safety and Housing team meetings/training to stay abreast of team priorities and facilitate information sharing across both teams.
- 2.6. An Arun Housing ASB Caseworker case study is provided in [Appendix 2](#) to illustrate the complexity of joint casework and the need to engage with a wide range of agencies to effect positive outcomes.
- 2.7. Anti-social behaviour reported to the Police: Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Sussex Police data reports that levels of ASB have risen slightly across West Sussex (+259 offences). Arun has the second highest level of reported ASB at 3,697 incidents during 2017/18: this has risen by 3% (+106) from last year. Please refer to [Appendix 3](#) for further information.

3. STREET COMMUNITIES

KEY OUTCOMES

- *Implement strategic and operational partnership mechanisms that effectively identify and manage individuals in street communities*
 - *Aim to reduce re-offending and vulnerability of those involved in street communities on a long term sustainable basis*
- 3.1. Street community refers to a specific cohort of individuals who choose to congregate and conduct their social life in public areas, usually typified by consumption of alcohol and / or drugs which gives rise to public concern and / or disorder. Street Community individuals can be rough sleeping, insecurely housed or may have their own accommodation. Partnership work to date to reduce the impact of Street Communities within Arun is set out below.
- 3.2. **Arun Street Community Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC)** is where key partners regularly meet to discuss individual cases, agreeing and delivering actions to mitigate and / or reduce individual and community risk factors. The MARAC ensures there is regular exchange of information and agencies are held to account for agreed actions to improve outcomes for Street Community individuals and reduce the level of nuisance for the community. Meetings are co-chaired by the Arun DC Community Safety and Arun DC Housing manager in recognition of the shared outcomes for this cohort.
- 3.3. *Key partnership achievements for the MARAC group include:*
- 3.3.1. From April 2016 to September 2018, the working group has proactively assessed risk and developed shared action plans for 148 individuals identified street community individuals. Partnership activity and outcomes for each year is shown below:

	2016-17	2017-18	April 2018 – September 2018
No of individuals	43	48	57
No of Rough Sleepers	16 (37%)	34 (71%)	31 (54%)
No of individuals with active drug use (class A)	25 (58%)	24 (50%)	47 (82%)

3.3.2. Noticeable trends are emerging from the MARAC data, include the increase of rough sleepers in Arun and critically, the exponential increase of individuals using Class A drugs. Within this data set, all rough sleepers regularly use Class A substances, typically heroin and crack cocaine. This presents partners, including Housing and Community Safety with complex challenges that encompass both public health and criminal justice interventions. It is generally accepted that it is difficult to sustainably re-house individuals who have entrenched drug addiction. The majority of the street community also have known links to county lines (see section 4.1) and are therefore involved in some form of criminality. The reasons for this are speculative but a strong case can be made that this phenomena is linked to the proliferation of drug availability as a result of county lines. The necessity of both welfare and criminal justice partners to work together to effectively manage and address the street community cohort is a critical success factor going forward.

3.3.3. 64 (52%) individuals in total have been discharged from MARAC meetings between Apr 2016 – to date as they have sustained good progress in reducing their risk factors (for example: housed, reduced consumption of drugs and / or alcohol, engaged with healthcare and partner services to meet identified needs).

3.3.4. 43 (35%) individuals have been accommodated – 8 within ADC properties: 35 in RSL/private let or other.

3.4. The Safer Arun Partnership extended funding for the ‘**Arun Street Community Outreach Keyworker**’ who works with the most complex and entrenched street community individuals in Arun to bring about sustained positive behavioural changes. Cases are identified and agreed at the Arun Street Community MARAC (section 3.2.1). This role has been pivotal to the partnership achieving its desired strategic aims as outlined in section 3.9.

3.5. *Key achievements include:*

3.5.1. The Keyworker has worked with 22 clients in 2017/18

3.5.2. Reduced involvement in reported anti-social behaviour by 99% (210 reports to 2)

- 3.5.3. Reduced criminality and re-offending by 94% (109 offences prior to support and 6 post) delivering a key outcome of reducing public risk and concern.
- 3.5.4. Of 18 rough sleeping clients, 15 were assisted in securing appropriate housing, 1 client disengaged, 2 clients remained rough sleeping.
- 3.5.5. 4 clients at risk of eviction were supported to maintain existing tenancies.
- 3.5.6. Cost benefit analysis shows that the project has delivered a cost saving of £471,657 to criminal justice agencies (in relation to reduced demand to address crime and anti-social behaviour) and a cost benefit of £129,075 by removing rough sleepers from the streets (source: Manchester Unit Cost Database 2015 v1.4).
- 3.5.7. All clients were supported to access drugs and alcohol treatment and recovery services.
- 3.5.8. Acted as an advocate for clients to gain access to required physical and mental health services to improve wellbeing for example, all clients now have a registered GP.

3.6. **MHCLG funded Arun Homeless Outreach Keyworker:** the Community Manager and Housing Manager worked jointly to secure additional funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government to provide a Homeless Outreach Keyworker (based within the Community Safety team). The resource, operational from July 2017 to date, works alongside the Street Community Outreach Keyworker to respond to those who are either rough sleeping or part of the street community in Arun and provide an intensive key working service for clients. Initially a 12 month fixed term role, the Housing Manager and Community Manager secured an additional 12 months funding to extend the role to continue until March 2019. The current post holder is on secondment from the Council's Housing Options team enabling and supporting increased cross working knowledge and information sharing to improve service delivery and integrated working between both Community Safety and Housing.

- 3.6.1. The role has worked with 8 clients to date, securing sustainable accommodation for two individuals and providing housing relief for two clients.
- 3.6.2. An Arun Homeless Outreach Keyworker case study is provided in Appendix 4.

3.7. Both of these Keyworker roles provide a vital connection between Housing, Community Safety and a wide variety of external partners to successfully address and reduce rough sleeping in Arun. They are cross cutting roles and have specialist skills and knowledges from housing, criminal justice and welfare services that enable them to navigate partnership pathways to secure the right services for clients. Their front line skills are also specialist, utilising a variety of brief interventions to work with clients to bring about conditions for change on a long term basis. Their role and contribution to reducing homelessness and effectively addressing public concerns has been both pivotal and significant. They are a highly valued resource within the partnership.

1.1. The overarching aim of SAP in delivering these street community projects through partnership working is twofold:

- *Reduce the prevalence of anti-social behaviour and crime perpetrated by this specific cohort and therefore, its negative impact in local communities; and*
- *Reduce individual's risky behaviour through intervention to reduce vulnerability and support sustainable improved outcomes for them.*

2. SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME

2.1. Serious and organised crime mainly relating to County drug lines is a major contributor to the violent crime experienced within Arun. There are upwards of 12 County lines operating within Arun. County lines are drug networks usually originating in London which use the national rail network to distribute drugs (crack and heroin) across the UK. These lines are transient as are the individuals who drug run for them, creating unique difficulties in establishing accurate and reliable information. As both Bognor Regis and Littlehampton are train terminus points, these towns have seen the highest activity of County lines within Arun.

2.2. Associated with County lines, is cuckooing. Cuckooing is a type of crime whereby a vulnerable individual or family are befriended by a drug dealer who goes on to take over their home in order to conduct illegal drug activity. It gets its name from the cuckoo bird which invades another bird's nest. Drug dealers rarely take possession of the home by force but instead feed on the vulnerabilities of the victim (e.g. supplying them with drugs in exchange for use of their home or befriending socially isolated individuals). Drug gangs will maintain control over the victim through violence (including forcible confinement and forced sexual acts).

2.3. Within a local context in Arun the drug dealers usually target crack or heroin addicts or recovering addicts including those with mental health, learning disabilities and recently housed street community individuals. There are currently over 70 known properties that have been cuckooed in the last year, resulting in joint interventions between the Police, ASB and Neighbourhood Housing team and local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Approximately 27% of these are ADC housing properties in 2017/18. From April 2017 to September 2018, the Housing ASB Caseworker delivered 300 interventions related to cuckooing for Arun DC tenants (compared to 142 interventions that the ASB caseworkers delivered to other tenure types in the District). This highlights that cuckooing is a phenomena that is having a significant impact within the Council's tenancy management function ([Appendix 5](#) provides further information of ASB interventions by tenure type).

2.4. *Key partnership achievements for the ASB and Housing teams include:*

2.4.1. Six partial Closure Orders obtained for Arun District Council properties to safeguard the tenants and wider community. These have had an overall positive impact in significantly reducing the occurrence of anti-social behaviour associated with these properties. Where breaches have occurred, this has provided essential evidence by which the Council can progress eviction of problematic tenants.

2.4.2. ASB Team and Housing colleagues have developed joint templates and support information to issue to Arun DC tenants who are cuckooing victims to reduce their complicity.

2.4.3. Community Safety team have written a policy for ADC staff to respond to cuckooing concerns within their housing stock in consultation with Neighbourhood Housing providing a clear policy pathway and guidance for officers.

2.4.4. Community Safety Team have provided training on cuckooing to various contractors identified by the Housing team who work in Council stock to help raise awareness, improve identification and reporting of concerns to support early interventions and help safeguard vulnerable tenants.

2.5. *Key Operational Barriers:*

2.5.1. Cuckooing is a growing problem within Arun and although there are excellent multi-agency partnerships, it is resource intensive and there are capacity constraints within some partner organisations.

2.6. *Future Plans*

- 2.6.1. An Arun & Chichester Serious and Organised Crime Operational Group has been established (2018) which Community Safety and Housing representatives attend. It brings together local partners to build a comprehensive picture of organised crime group activity across both areas and develop multi-agency relationships to effectively address intelligence gaps and co-ordinate disruption activity.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT

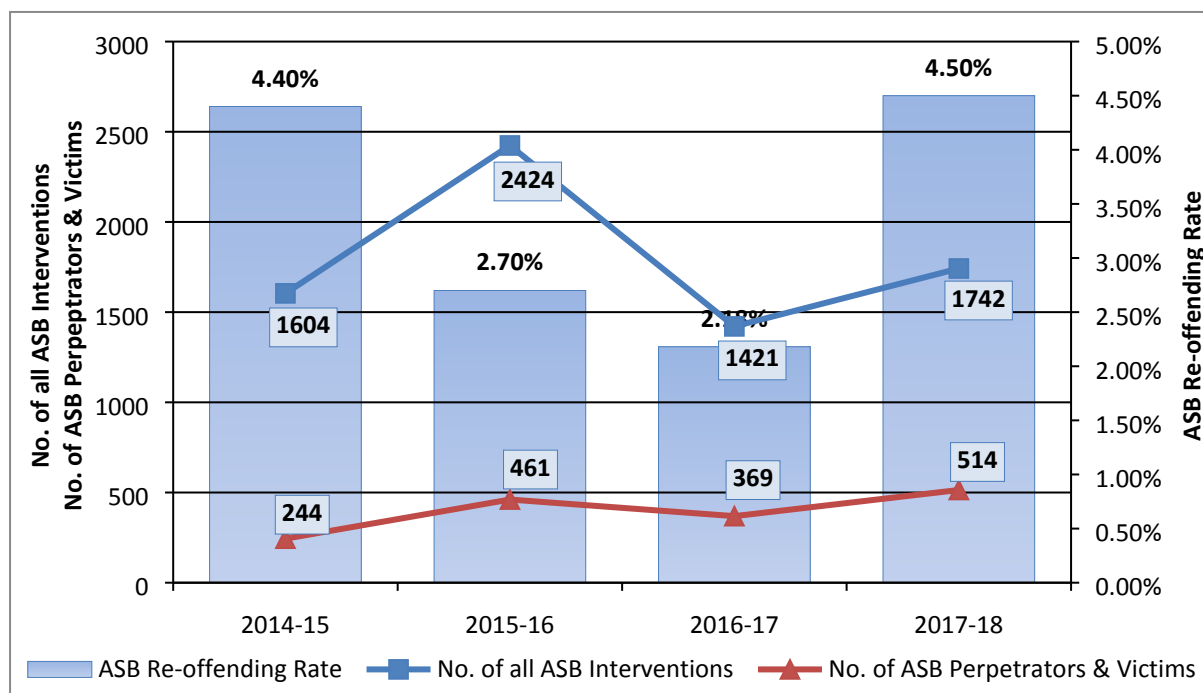
- 3.1. This is a developing area of work for SAP and Community Safety jointly funded by SAP & WSCC. A Neighbourhood Development worker started in November 2017 to focus work in Bersted ward (Bognor) and River ward (Littlehampton). An operational needs analysis of service provision was conducted and used alongside the national 2015 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) to evidence the need for focussed support in the community. The role will look at communities holistically and work with groups and partners to improve access to services for vulnerable residents: the role will also identify trends of anti-social behaviour and work closely with the ASB team to understand the bigger picture and underlying community tensions.
- 3.2. *Key partnership achievements for the Neighbourhood Development and Housing teams include (Nov 2017 to Sept 2018):*
- 3.2.1. Both of these identified wards include a large percentage of ADC owned housing stock. Strong links with the Neighbourhood Housing team have been essential to ensure fluid communication including residents in all activity undertaken within the areas and ensure that interventions and proposals are reflective of current issues and perceptions.
- 3.2.2. Reinvigorating the Bersted Resident Association and encouraging residents to re-engage with their community and Neighbourhood Housing initiatives (e.g. estate walkabouts).
- 3.2.3. Resident / community surveys to ensure their voice is central to all work undertaken.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1. This report has provided compelling evidence of the value and benefit of the Community Safety, ASB and Housing Teams working together to address and resolve shared problems and of the positive community impact this has had. The current community needs and risks in Arun are becoming increasingly complex and it is of fundamental importance that this integrated working continues. Essential to this is strategic recognition and support that these two functions are connected and a commitment to promoting a culture of positive and open relationships between each service area. Partnership working, both internally and with external partners should not be viewed as a discretionary activity, rather it is a critical success factor to achieve sustainable reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour and in this sense, is an essential, if not mandatory activity. Sharing and pooling specialist skills, knowledge, tools, powers and resources affords the best protection for local communities.

Appendix 1 – Arun Anti-social Behaviour Team

Arun Anti-social Behaviour Team Performance 2017-2018



ASB Interventions by Tenure 2017-2018

Housing Provider	Percentage (%)
Arun District Council	42%
Private Let	19%
Owner Occupier	17%
No Fixed Abode	3%
Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	12%
Unknown	7%

Appendix 2 – Arun Housing Anti-Social Behaviour Case Study



Trigger: Numerous neighbouring residents' complaints of noise, increased footfall of anti-social visitors at unsociable hours and drug litter surrounding a property within Arun

Property Tenure: ADC sheltered accommodation.

Resident Demographics: Over 55 years of age

Tenant: 58 year old male with acquired brain injury, previous rough sleeper, Class A drug user. Previously evicted from privately rented properties due to drug misuse/alleged drug dealing.

Safeguarding Concerns: Poor physical and mental health. High risk tenant for drug exploitation and cuckooing due to history and current neighbour reports. Non engagement with Adult Social Care Services.

Actions

- Early interventions to support tenant by Neighbourhood Housing Officer (including re-referrals to local drug service provider).
- ADC Housing Anti-social behaviour (ASB) Officer signed tenant up to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC)
- On breach of ABC and continued concerning reports from neighbours, joint visits were undertaken with the Housing ASB Officer and Sussex Police partners.
- CCTV installed in the property by Housing ASB Officer.
- Housing ASB Officer and Neighbourhood Housing issued tenancy warnings.
- Housing ASB Officer engaged with neighbours to provide reassurance and support for their wellbeing and safety.

Outcomes

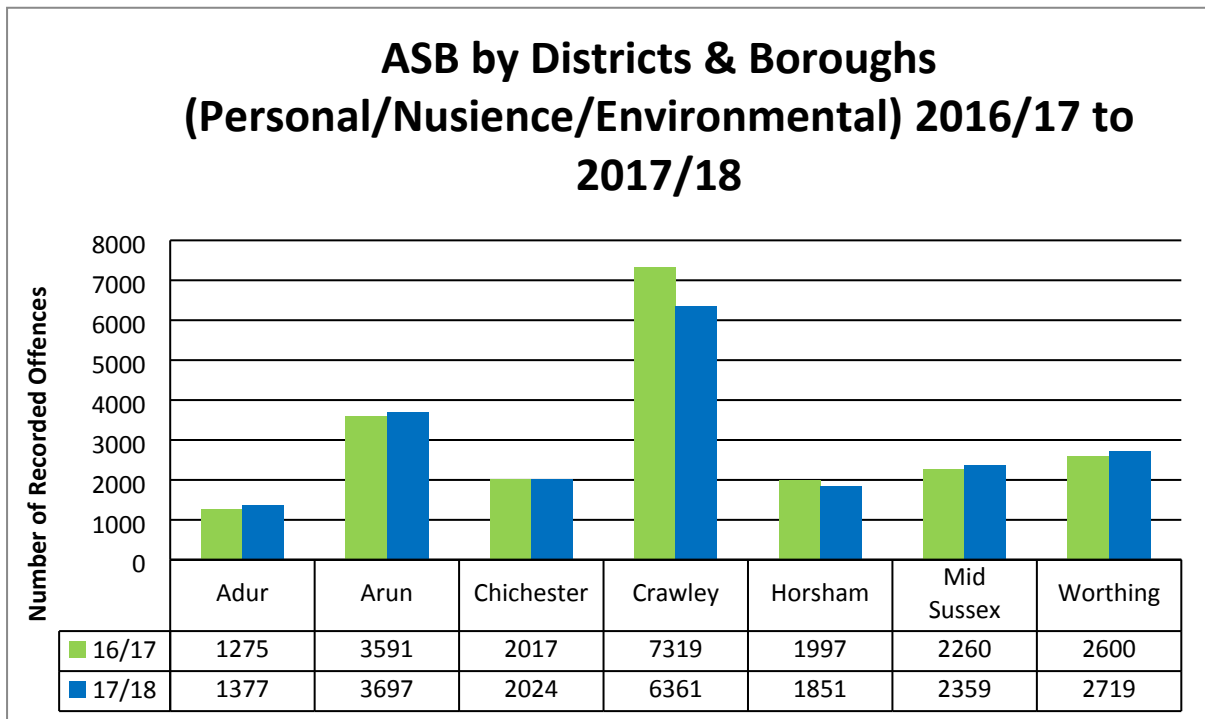
- A police warrant was executed and drug to the value of £1400 and £500 cash was seized. Two adult males were arrested and a Partial Closure Order was obtained by the Housing ASB Officer in partnership with the ADC Legal Team. Arun District Council had the power to apply to safeguard the tenant and avoid eviction action.
- On breach of the Closure Order, the Housing ASB Officer and Neighbourhood Housing team quickly and successfully evicted the tenant.

Conclusion

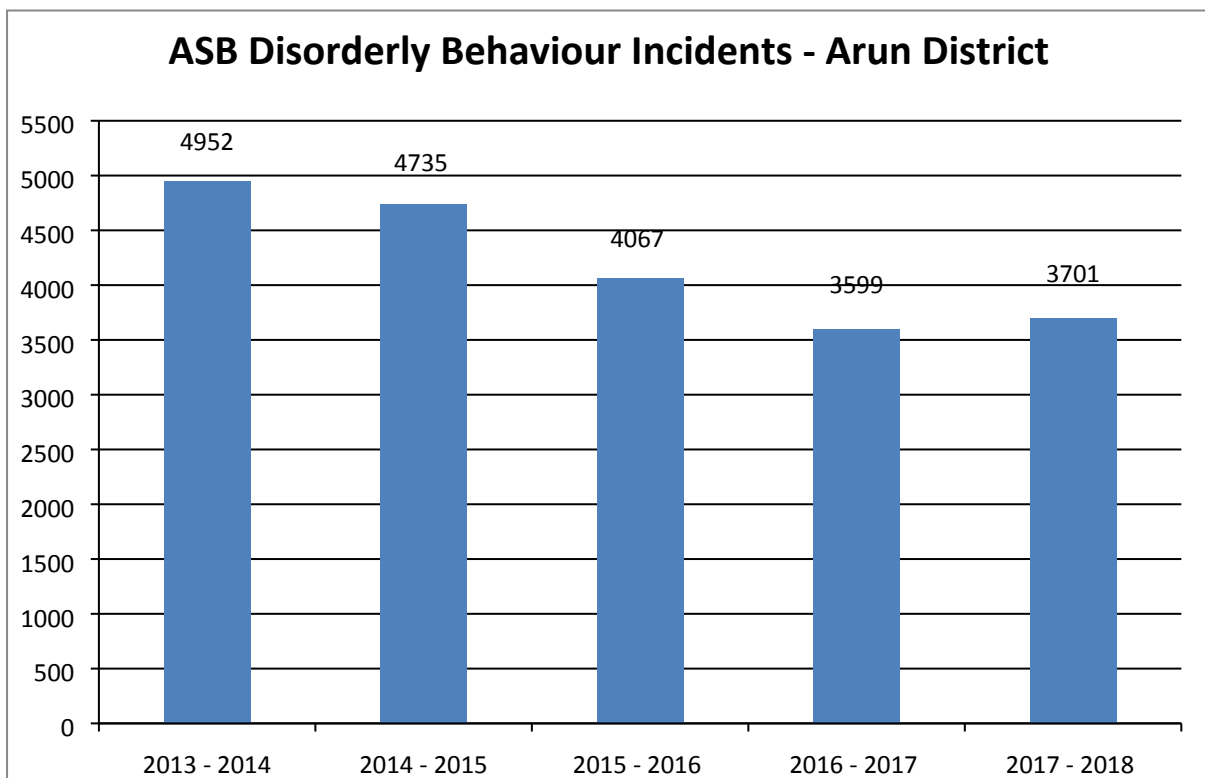
This case study highlights the lengths that the both the Housing and ASB team will go to safeguard tenants, residents and the local community as well as to prevent homelessness where possible. However the clear boundaries of unacceptable behaviour are upheld and as Council we will utilise every enforcement tool to ensure the safety of the community.

Appendix 3 – Police reports of Arun ASB Disorderly Behaviour Incidents

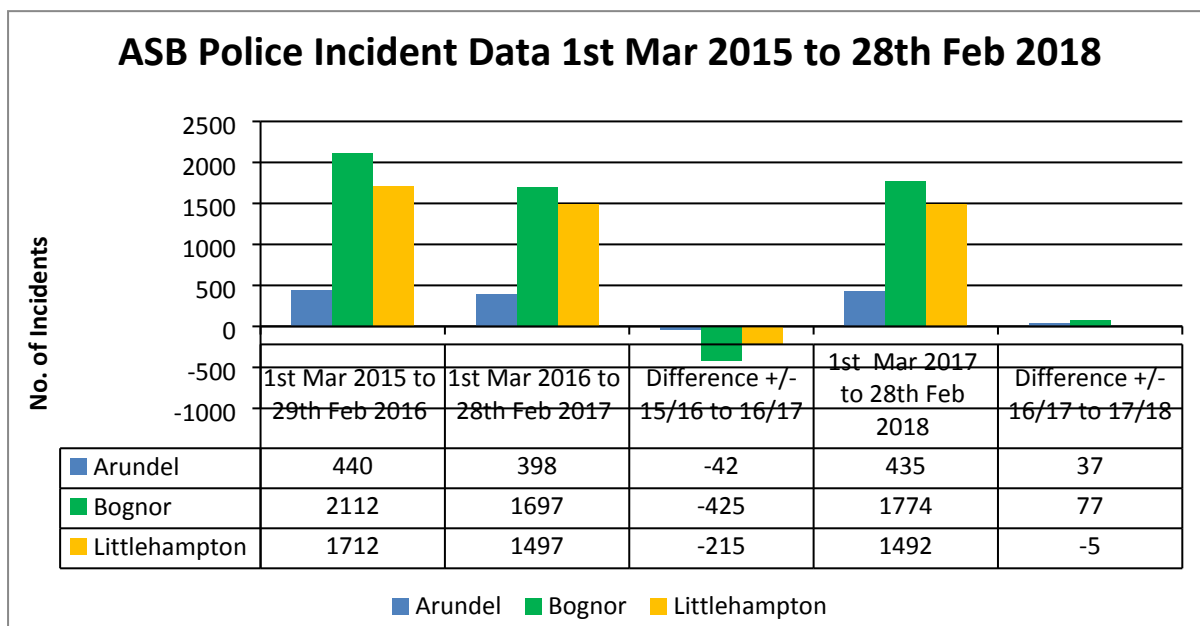
West Sussex ASB Sussex Police Incident Data by District/Borough



Arun ASB Sussex Police Incident Data by Performance Year



Arun ASB Sussex Police Incident Data by Area



Data Source – Police Data

Appendix 4 – Homeless Outreach Keyworker Case Study



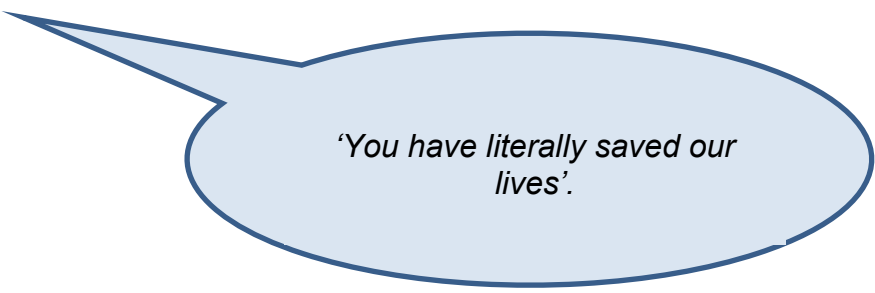
Client A & partner Client B: 28 year old male and 34 year old female living in Arun with a dog.

Accommodation status: Homeless since 2015; evicted from supported accommodation, living in a tent

Substance Addictions: Alcohol dependant and methadone scripted

Actions

- Client A & B were referred to the Arun Street MARAC via the Parks team and were connected with one of the Street Community Keyworkers.
- Both clients were grateful and positive about the support being offered:



'You have literally saved our lives'.

- Over a period of five months regular key work meetings were organised and accommodation was secured within 1 week through the keyworkers' in depth knowledge of housing legislation (Homelessness reduction Act – HRA) and arranging kennels for their dog whilst they were waiting to apply for further accommodation.
- Both clients and their dog were the first individuals and pet accessing the new Stonepillow Hostel. They are the only couple to date to have benefitted from the Hostel's policy changes.
- The keyworker has referred both clients to further long term supported accommodation which will enable them to continue living as a couple with their dog at the same time as learning crucial skills for maintaining a tenancy.
- In addition to supporting housing needs, the keyworker has also assisted with obtaining ID, GP & dentist registrations, CGL support and attending other relevant appointments e.g Probation and Maximus (return to work skills support).

Outcomes

- Client A and B are no longer impacting on the public open green spaces by camping in their tent.
- They are able to exercise their human rights and free choice by living as a couple with their pet as well as accessing support for their additional needs (e.g. illiteracy).
- Both clients have shown interest in furthering their learning and education.
- Client B has been able to sustain her weekend job and continues to make applications for full time employment.
- Client A has reduced his alcohol consumption significantly.

Conclusion

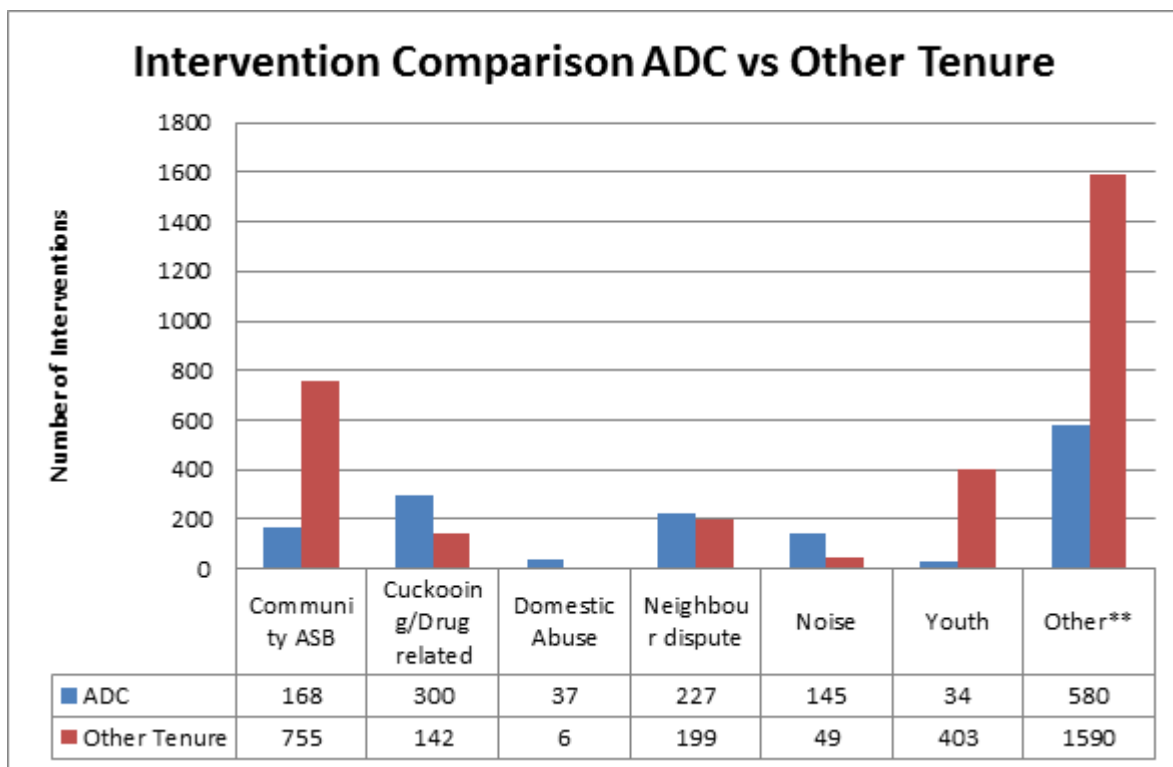
This case study clearly demonstrates the benefits that have been experienced with the Housing secondment to the Community Safety Street Outreach programme.

The keyworker's experience and knowledge on HRA and the Council's approach to supporting homeless individual's access more assistance, has been demonstrated by the timely and effective sourcing of alternative accommodation. Their knowledge also informs the clients of the necessity to sustaining their tenancies to enable them to re-approach the Housing Options team in the future should they find themselves in crisis for reasons outside their control. This demonstrated behaviour from Client A & B would clear any previous intentional decisions against them upon re-approach.

Client A and B are positive about the future and their prospects that the keyworker has been integral to developing with them and are no longer impacting on the wider community through their rough sleeping.

Appendix 5 – Anti-social behaviour interventions by tenure type

April 2017 – September 2018



** warning letters, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Notice of Seeking Possession, Injunctions, professional / problem solving meetings