

## My job as the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Officer Brian Kingston, tells us about his work.

### What does your job involve?

I work in the council's Community Safety Team supporting the Spelthorne Safer Stronger Partnership, it's my job to work with the Police and social landlords (housing associations) to investigate complaints about antisocial behaviour. Together we agree a plan to tackle each problem.

### What sort of antisocial behaviour is reported to you?

It's varied - complaints about children hanging round the streets being a nuisance are common; parking issues come up quite a lot and so do neighbour disputes (which can be hard to resolve).

### Is antisocial behaviour a big problem in Spelthorne?

The number of complaints about antisocial behaviour are actually going down but obviously it's a serious problem for anyone affected and it can have a huge impact on individuals, families and communities.

### What happens when you receive a complaint about antisocial behaviour?

I start by meeting the Police and, where relevant, the housing association to gain any background information they may have. We then usually make a joint visit to the individuals concerned to gain a fuller picture and help us decide the

best course of action. Where children are the source of the problem, we may also involve youth service providers who can help with a range of social and sports activities.

### What powers do you have?

Between the various people involved, we have a good range of powers. For example, we can apply to the court to issue an ASBO (antisocial behaviour order) which carries certain conditions which individuals have to meet, and the Police can also issue dispersal orders which stop people from gathering in certain places. We also frequently use 'acceptable behaviour contracts' and 'good neighbour agreements' which involve individuals or groups of individuals voluntarily signing-up to a code of conduct. Social landlords also have a wide range of powers under housing law.

### Do ASBOs work?

I think they can be effective but the key thing is to make sure that the conditions in the order are appropriate and that the progress of the individual is closely monitored.

### Give us an example of a success story

We recently had a problem reported to us about a road in Ashford where a number of children who lived in the street were causing problems for the other residents. Working with A2 Dominion Housing Group (who owned a number of the properties) and the Police we held 'street-meets' to bring everyone concerned together to discuss the problems and sign up to a 'good neighbour agreement'. We also organised a number of fun activities which the children could earn by helping to clean up the street and sticking to good behaviour. I'm pleased to say that complaints have now significantly reduced.

### What's the best thing about your job?

Being able to help people who are at the end of their tether is definitely the best thing about my job. There isn't always a quick fix for all problems but we keep working at it and there's a great sense of achievement when you can see it pay off and someone's life improve.

### What should residents do if they have problems with antisocial behaviour?

If it's an ongoing antisocial behaviour problem they can call me on **01784 446322** or e-mail me at **b.kingston@spelthorne.gov.uk**

It's helpful if people keep a diary of the problems they've experienced. If residents need to report a specific crime they should contact the Police through the normal channels.

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Left to right: YPCSO Adam Justice - Youth Police Community Support Officer, PC Sandra King - Police Youth Intervention Officer, Brian Kingston - Antisocial Behaviour Officer, PS Martin Jones - Community Safety Sergeant.

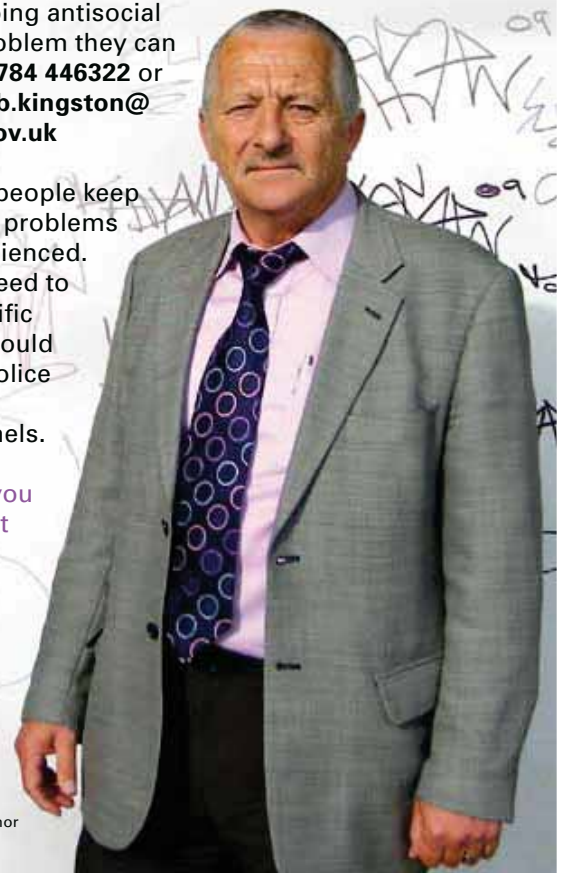


Photo: Mick Raynor