

Public Concern About ASB And Support For ASBOs

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With renewed focus on restoring respect and the need to tackle anti-social behaviour post- election, a new survey by MORI Social Research Institute provides a gauge of public opinion towards the use of anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs). The research, launched at a MORI conference on 9th June, with speeches from Nick Pearce, Director of IPPR and Louise Casey, Head of the Anti Social Behaviour Unit for the Home Office, shows:

- There is strong support for issuing ASBOs to people responsible for anti-social behaviour. Eight in 10 are in support (82%), whilst only a small minority express opposition (five percent)
- Those who say they know at least a fair amount about ASBOs are more likely to strongly support them (compared to those who know little), as are those who believe ASBOs are being used in their own local areas.

Support is strong amongst readers of all national newspapers, both broadsheet and tabloid, right and left-leaning. Levels of support amongst readers of some key national papers are as follows:

- The Sun = 88%
- Daily Mail = 88%
- Daily Telegraph = 80%
- Mirror = 78%
- Guardian = 67%

Public support for ASBOs comes despite the fact that opinion is more divided on their effectiveness. Among those who have heard of ASBOs, four in 10 feel they are effective in stopping people from causing anti-social behaviour (39%), but 46% do not. But this result is similar to ratings given in previous surveys by MORI for the courts and social services, as well as prison.

However, most people do not feel ASBOs are counter productive – only 20% agree they create more problems than they solve – some 41% disagree with this idea.

MORI's analysis suggests that support for ASBOs is in part simply because it highlights that something is being done. Most feel that ASBOs are an effective sign of action: seven in ten agree that ASBOs send out a clear message that action will be taken against anti-social behaviour (70%)

Half agree that ASBOs help to restore common standards of behaviour and respect in local areas (49% v 23% disagree), whilst higher proportions agree that ASBOs give victims a break from anti-social behaviour (54% v 20%) and are a good way of dealing with teenagers responsible for anti-social behaviour (59% v 19%)

Although there is strong support for the use of ASBOs, people tend to favour people being given a final warning before they receive an Order (52% agree with this approach, compared to 32% who do not).

Ben Page, Director of the MORI Social Research Institute said

"Our previous research into quality of life across Britain has consistently highlighted activities for teenagers and disorder as key issues that the public want action on. The high levels of support for ASBOs reflect this concern. Even if they are only one part of the solution, the public wants to see something being done"

Louise Casey, Director of the Government's Anti Social Behaviour Unit said:

"The MORI interviews demonstrate the massive support the public have for ASBOs and the fight back being carried out by communities up and down the country against, lawless, unacceptable behaviour. Unless we send out a clear signal using ASBOs that actions have consequences and that standards have to be upheld, problem behaviour will never be tackled and we'll never begin to rebuild respect in our communities."

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