

Your guide to anti-social behaviour



**Kent
Police**

www.kent.police.uk



Introduction

While Kent is a safe county with low levels of serious crime, nuisance behaviour continues to disrupt the lives of many.

At Kent Police we take this very seriously which is why we have introduced more neighbourhood officers to work with residents and local organisations in your area.

We are also using all the powers available to us to address the causes of the problems, act to prevent them and where necessary take action against those responsible.

This leaflet explains what anti-social behaviour is, how the police and other public bodies can deal with it and how you and your community can play your part in helping improve your local quality of life.

What is anti-social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour is any behaviour that affects other people in a bad way.

This could be:

- noise nuisance
- litter and fly-tipping
- vandalism
- graffiti
- fires being started
- nuisance and abandoned vehicles
- rowdy behaviour
- begging
- drunkenness
- dealing in or taking drugs
- gangs or groups behaving in an intimidating way
- prostitution
- indecent behaviour
- nuisance neighbours
- threatening behaviour and harassment
- misuse of fireworks
- noisy or intimidating dogs
- hoax calls to emergency services

Any of these can make an area frightening and unpleasant for people to live, work and relax in. Sometimes the behaviour forces people to change the way they live.

This is not right, which is why the police, councils, Kent Fire and Rescue and other public and voluntary organisations now work together to use their powers to get to the root of the problem and take action to stop it.



What can **we** do about it?

The police and other organisations have various powers to deal with anti-social behaviour. By working together and pooling our powers we can rid the area of a nuisance.

This may be through prevention (for example making local improvements or providing things for young people to do to keep them out of trouble), working with offenders, their families and the wider community to help them change, or by using various powers to enforce the law.

These powers include:

Acceptable behaviour agreements (ABAs)

– where an individual recognises the effect of their behaviour on others, and agrees not to repeat this behaviour. They may be offered support to help them do this.

Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs)

– court orders to stop persistent nuisance can be made against anyone aged 10 and over. Breaching an ASBO can lead to up to five years in prison or a fine of up to £5,000 for adults and various penalties for young people.

Closure notices

– to shut down licensed premises causing noise nuisance and rowdy behaviour or houses where people deal in and take class A drugs. Closures can last for up to six months.

Designated public place orders

– limit drinking of alcohol in a set area. Alcohol can be confiscated and people refusing to cooperate can be arrested and prosecuted, given a £50 penalty notice or banned from drinking in public.



Dispersal orders – can be used to move groups of people away from a particular area if they are believed to be responsible for or likely to cause a nuisance to others. Young people under 16 can also be returned home if they are at risk from crime and nuisance behaviour or are responsible for causing it.

Fixed penalty notices and **penalty notices** for disorder give police officers, community support officers and accredited council officers powers to impose fines of up to £80 for causing nuisance.

Court penalties – ranging from a prison sentence, fines of up to £5,000 in a magistrates' court, probation or orders including community service, curfews and attendance centre orders.



What are we **doing**?

Across Kent and Medway police are working with councils, fire and rescue service, local business, social and private landlords, licensed premises and, most importantly, local communities to take action against anti-social behaviour.

We have a growing number of local neighbourhood police officers and police community support officers who work with residents and others to find solutions. We are also setting up a growing number of community safety units with partner organisations, where you can report anti-social behaviour.

Local action has included:

- local surveys to find out what worries residents – and then dealing with the problems;
- environmental improvements, clearing up eyesore areas to create open spaces for local people to use;
- dealing with abandoned and illegal cars;
- identifying people who dump rubbish and taking them to court;
- organising football and other activities to give local youngsters something to do;
- awards recognising young people's contribution to local life;
- dealing with intimidating groups in public places;
- shutting down pubs and houses causing local nuisance;
- schemes to tackle drink-related nuisance behaviour, so that people can feel safe when they go for an evening out;
- providing support for families with problems.



Police officers can use other powers, for example the Public Order Act 1986, to arrest people behaving in a way likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to others.



What can **others** do about it?

Local **councils** have powers to deal with:

- abandoned vehicles
- graffiti and fly-posting
- damage to public property (street lights, signs etc)
- dumped rubbish and fly-tipping
- noise, including loud music, parties, noisy neighbours, alarms, noisy animals and noise from pubs and clubs.

Many have special teams of staff, including wardens, who deal with these problems.

Kent Fire and Rescue Service works to reduce the number of fires deliberately started in rubbish and abandoned vehicles. They organise activities to raise awareness of the dangers and work with young people in and outside school.

Social landlords can take action against nuisance tenants and work to design housing developments to reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour.

Local **business** organisations work closely with other agencies to tackle nuisance in town centres and neighbourhood shopping areas.



What can **you** do?

Tell us, your local council, landlord or residents' group about problems. If we are aware of them we can do something about them.

Record when and where the problems are happening, including:

- dates and times of incidents,
- as much detail as possible about what happened,
- names and/or descriptions of those involved,
- details of any witnesses,
- how the incident has affected you.

Speak to your neighbourhood police officer.

Join Neighbourhood Watch, your residents or tenants' association or a local action group.

You could also become a member of our citizens' panel to give your views on a range of policing issues.

We also welcome volunteers to work as Special Constables alongside police officers.

Contact us

Kent Police works closely with local authorities and other organisations to deal with anti-social behaviour. Sometimes one particular organisation will be best placed to deal with a problem (see p6).

It is not always possible to respond immediately, but once we or other agencies are aware of your problem we can start to gather information and evidence and agree on the most appropriate response either by one organisation or working together.

For all non-urgent crime reports or enquiries call Kent Police on 01622 690690

If you are deaf or speech impaired, text 'police' then your message to 60066

If life is in danger or a crime is in progress, call 999



Racial and homophobic incidents

- Kent Homophobic Incident Reporting Line - 0800 328 9162
- Kent Racial Incident Reporting Line – 0800 138 1624

These lines open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to receive calls relating to incidents and other concerns in relation to racism or homophobia which are hate crimes. All calls are answered by a trained operator.

Online

- Visit our website: **www.kent.police.uk** for more crime prevention advice and to find out about neighbourhood policing in your area.
- Report a minor crime online: **www.reportacrime.kent.police.uk**
- Find out about our community messaging service: **www.kent.communitymessaging.net**

Email

Send you query to: **enquiries@kent.pnn.police.uk** Your email will be forwarded to the person best able to deal with your query.



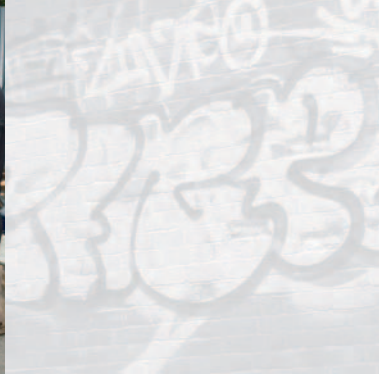
Other useful contact numbers

Councils

Ashford Borough Council	01233 331111
Canterbury City Council	01227 862000
Dartford Borough Council	01322 343434
Dover District Council	01304 821199
Gravesham Borough Council	01474 337000
Maidstone Borough Council	01622 602000
Medway Council	01634 333333
Shepway District Council	01303 853000
Sevenoaks District Council	01732 227000
Swale Borough Council	01795 417850
Thanet District Council	01843 577000
Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council	01732 844522
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council	01892 526121

Other

Kent Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
Kent County Council	08458 247247
Kent Fire and Rescue	01622 692121
Trading Standards	Kent: 08454 040506 Medway: 01634 333555



This leaflet is also available in large print to download from our website: www.kent.police.uk

Alternatively call **01622 652158** for more information or to order a copy.

If you would like a copy of this leaflet in another language or format please call **01622 652158**.

We hope you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like more copies or have any suggestions on how we can improve it or would like to tell us what other information you would find useful please write to:

- Head of Corporate Communications, Kent Police headquarters, Sutton Road, Maidstone ME15 9BZ.