

Understanding and addressing anti-social behaviour: A rapid review of the evidence

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Background

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a broad term often used to describe a range of actions and behaviours that violate social norms in specific contexts. Anti-social behaviours are often associated with youth, however this is not an issue that is singularly confined to young people. Anti-social behaviours can have a negative impact on individuals, families and communities, affect mental and physical health and well-being and are associated with considerable social and fiscal costs to society.

Aim

The purpose of this review was to gather and synthesise all high quality peer-reviewed international and national literature on anti-social behaviour, in order to help inform policy development in relation to anti-social behaviour in Ireland.

Method

A rapid review approach was used for this evidence review. A total of 3,085 studies were identified. A Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow diagram was used to keep track of records. Independent screening against inclusion/exclusion criteria was conducted by two reviewers. The Critical Skills Appraisal Programme (CASP) was applied to assess quality and to act as an additional screening process. Sixty-five pieces of peer-reviewed literature were included in the final analysis for narrative review.

Findings

The results of the review highlighted the following:

- Definitions of anti-social behaviour
- Perceptions of anti-social behaviour
- The impacts and effects of anti-social behaviour
- Underlying factors for anti-social
- Approaches to addressing anti-social behaviour.

Dissemination

A report on the findings of the rapid review was published by the Department of Justice on September 19th 2022. The publication of the report followed presentation of the findings of the review by Dr Elena Vaughan to the Anti-Social Behaviour Forum, chaired by Minister of State James Browne, T.D. The Anti-Social Behaviour Forum included representatives from the Department of Justice, An Garda Síochána, the Probation Service, Le Chéile Mentoring and Youth Justice Support Services, Solas Project, Community Action Network and the Dublin Community SafetyPilot.

The report was co-authored by Dr Elena Vaughan, Mr Eoin Dennehy, Professor Colette Kelly and Professor Saoirse Nic Gabhainn.

The published report may be accessed here:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/42c4d-understanding-and-addressing-anti-social-behaviour-a-rapid-evidence-review/#>