

In January 2023, the National Business Crime Centre launched a survey based on three questions to assess the impact of anti-social behaviour (ASB) on businesses. The survey received 250 responses; this document provides a summary of those responses.

Introduction

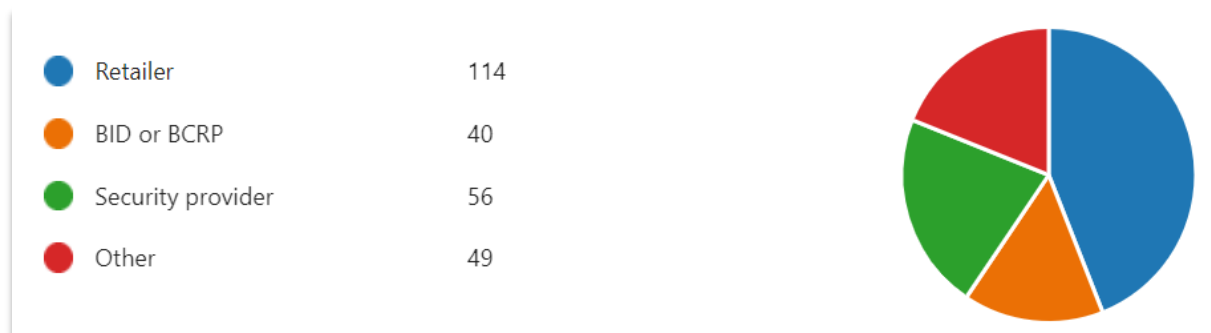
Anti-social behaviour can have a significant impact on businesses in several ways:

1. Loss of customers – harassment, vandalism, or theft can create an unwelcoming environment for customers, causing them to avoid the business. This can lead to a decline in sales and revenue.
2. Damage to property – behaviour such as vandalism can cause physical damage to the property, leading to repair costs and potentially forcing the business to close temporarily.
3. Increased security costs – businesses may need to invest in additional security measures, such as cameras or security personnel, to protect against antisocial behaviour. This can increase operating costs and reduce profitability.
4. Employee safety – ASB can create a dangerous work environment for employees, potentially leading to injuries or psychological distress. This can result in increased absenteeism, decreased productivity, and increased staff turnover.
5. Reputation damage – ASB occurring in or around a business can damage its reputation. This can lead to negative publicity, decreased trust from customers and stakeholders, and a decline in brand value.

Overall, anti-social behaviour can have a significant impact on the financial performance, operations, and reputation of a business.

1. Can you please describe the sector you are responding on behalf of?

Respondents included



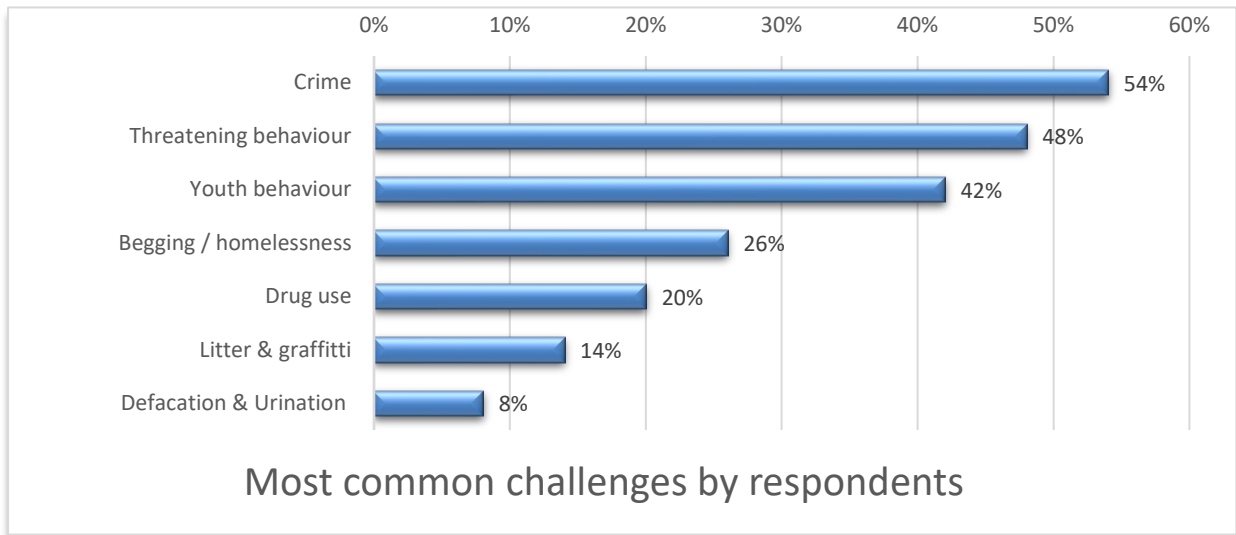
As well as the above, other respondents included:

- Banking
- Theatres
- Church
- Cinemas

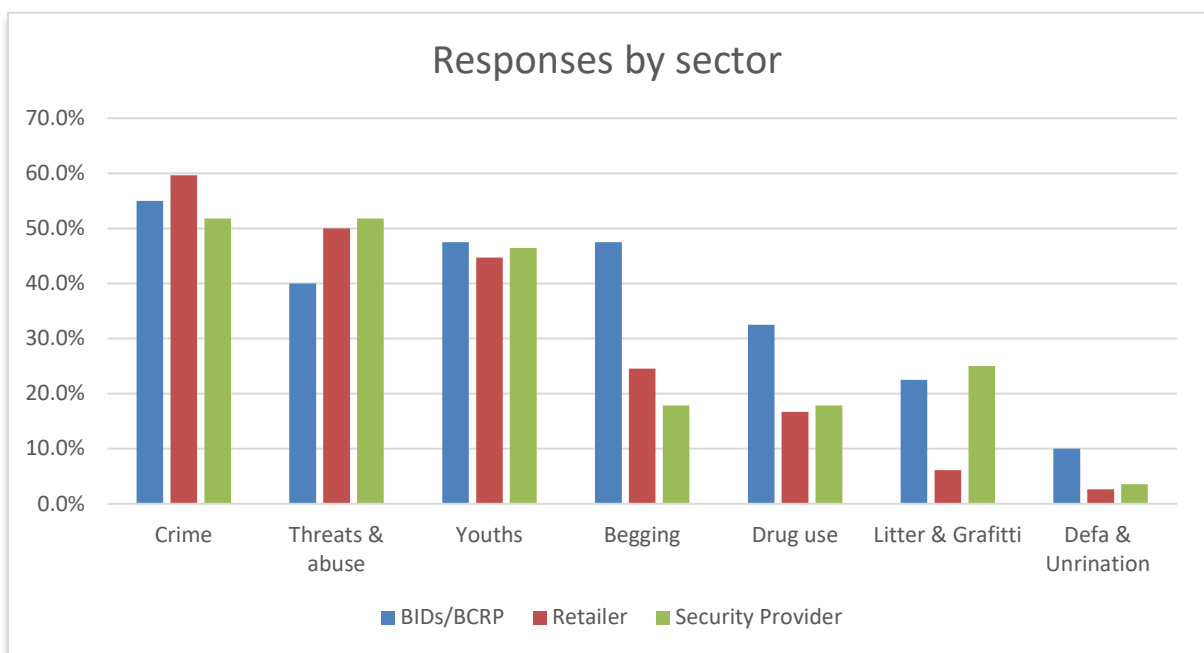
- Heritage
- Finance
- Art gallery
- Healthcare

- Local authority
- Hospitality
- Transport

2. Can you please list the top 3 ASB challenges you face as a business?



BIDs/BCRPs, Retailers and Security providers accounted for over 80% of responses, when the top challenges were broken down there were some clear differences. Crime was the top issue for retailers with threats of abuse being a top concern for retailers and security. BIDs/BCRPs have a place management function so were more likely to highlight issues such as begging/homelessness and drug use in public areas than the other two sectors.



The following provides an overview of the responses together with some comments, which have been attributed to the respondent.

Almost 54% of respondents listed challenges as being crimes with shop theft, assaults and criminal damage being the main topics.

“Shoplifters carrying weapons, knives, needles, scissors and threatening to stab staff officers when being approached to prevent theft.” *Security provider*

48% highlighted a growing issue of threatening behaviour towards employees and security staff. This included areas such as theatres and heritage sites.

“Audience disruptive behaviour and aggression (including occasional violent conduct) towards members of staff.” *Theatre and Live Performance*

“Threats of violence towards staff, this is most noticeable when staff ask visitors not to behave in ways that are inappropriate. We are lucky that these threats have not turned into attacks.” *Leisure/Heritage*

“Threatening behaviour from some more aggressive beggars/people under the influence/nuisance customers towards other customers and staff, to the point that we have had to invest in body cams for the safety of our team and customers.” *Arts/Theatre*

42% of respondents talked about young people becoming a challenge and had affected trade.

“Youths who think they own the town and can do whatever they like because there are no repercussions for their actions.” *Retailer*

“Uncontrollable groups of young people with intimidating, provocative behaviour, particularly to security guards and sometimes to police.” *BID/BCRP*

“Groups of youths running though Shopping Centre and retailers - this puts off shoppers coming to the area.” *BID/BCRP*

“Groups of youths entering shop and knocking things over and attempting theft.” *Retailer*

Begging and homelessness attracted over 26% of comments, this was extended to almost 8% of respondents saying street hygiene (defecation and urination) was a real concern, particularly in busy areas frequented by tourists.



“Homeless people sitting on our steps - suspected alcohol/drug abuse = abusive language & behaviour.” *Theatre*

“Homeless persons blocking fire exits, violent and aggressive customers around the front of the store, violent incidents nearby causing alarm.” *Retailer*

“I see police officers walking past beggars daily - they don't care what impact the beggars outside the retail unit has.” *Security Provider*

Drugs were mentioned in 20% of comments, often these were the same people who were committing crimes of shop theft etc. Litter and graffiti were mentioned by 14% of respondents across all sectors.

“People under the influence of drink and drugs trying to enter the premises and being aggressive to staff.” *Leisure/Gambling*

“Issues associated with rough sleeping - drug and alcohol abuse and colleagues feeling unsafe outside the office.” *Anonymous*

3. What would your ask be of policing and government in response to these challenges?

The most popular response with 55%, was the request for an increased police presence in the area to either prevent, or deal with ASB.

Police response

“To have more resources in terms of police/PCSOs available to respond to calls made around ASB.” *BID/BCRP & Retailer*

“I feel that a benefit would be to have more people out on foot patrol through the towns and cities. On a Friday and Saturday night some nights you would be lucky to have anyone on patrol.” *Retailer*

“Police / security presence to deter and provide help and more education around and provision of support for the homeless population.” *Retailer*

“Identified local officers to own and manage reports of this type of offending who can work directly with stores at a local level to tackle repeat offenders.” *Retailer*

“Currently ASB receives a lack lustre response with little cognisance of the impact this has.” *Retailer*



Perception of ASB

“ASB post COVID has increased significantly and this has a direct impact to business, profits have dropped and staff are having to endure abuse/threats. The lack of police presence and availability to attend reported incidents means that often staff and security staff have to try to deal with situations themselves and given their limited powers this has very little effect, especially with juveniles and the travelling community. A stronger policing presence in the town centre would have a marked improvement. A better response to crime reports with improved follow up on all crimes reported.” *Shopping Centre*

“Stop treating these issues as if they are a business crime issue, they are not, it is a community issue. The offenders are prolific and locally based (this is true in every location) and the victims are not businesses they are people.” *Retailer*

“Feel very much that these types of incidents are not a high priority for the police and that we’re left to manage them on our own - try to work with the councils however if it is illegal activity they direct us to 111/999 with little or delayed response.” *Theatre*

“Attend and Act. It is not taken seriously enough, but it effects peoples' lives on a large scale, in terms of frequency, as opposed to more 'serious' crimes which in reality tend only to effect a few and even then on low frequency. The sense of threat and fear that arises from ASB is under-rated.” *BID/BCRP*

“No point calling police as there are too few officers and secondly they then get a slap on the wrist by CPS who want to be too lenient.” *Security provider*

“Town centres are being hounded by groups of individuals intent on causing damage, harm and intimidation. We need more police presence on the streets and quicker resolutions. It needs to be easier to report incidents and to ensure the incidents are passed on to local neighbourhood policing and not triaged at the top or NFA'd before even going anywhere.” *BID/BCRP*

“The perception of crime and a sense of feeling unsafe in areas with a high concentration of street population is quite negative. We have to remember tourist coming to the UK may not be used to these things i.e: a beggar sitting at a cashpoint - tourists won't use the cashpoint.” *Security provider*

Reporting of ASB

“Always make sure the victims can report it on the ASB website. Please make it simpler, it took me 2hrs to finish it on one person before anything was done and over 6months. There needs to be a 3 month briefing, where the authorities come together and pool their reports to see if anything a pattern forming.” *Anonymous*



“Current system is broken - 999 calls are invariably sent to 101 even if incident is serious (my colleagues called 999 to report a heavily drugged up male getting into a car only to be told they needed to report on 101, 15min later still waiting to get through when male drove off). 101 never takes less than 20min to get through.” *Retailer*

“Working in big retailing areas, we never see any police apart from 999 calls which is usually deferred anyways to a 35 minute wait to 101.” *Retailer*

“Resources to improve police reporting channels - 101 doesn't work.” *Retailer*

“An easier way to report ASB instead of having to spend a large proportion of time on the phone or reporting online. If this was a quick process more reports would be submitted.” *BID/BCRP*

“Procedures and reporting systems with which to follow up on ASB.” *Retailer*

Existing legislation

There is a range of existing legislation designed to tackle anti-social behaviour, the following survey response that many are unaware of the legislation and how it can help them, or felt it wasn't being used to its full effect.

“An easier and quicker way to give CPWs, CPNs and CBOs as where we have them in place they work.” *BID/BCRP*

“Regular uniformed police patrolling ASB hotspots & effective use of CPW/CPN & CBOs.” *BID/BCRP*

“Streamline the law to allow quicker justice. Extend Community Protection Warnings/Notices to U 16s (perhaps issue against parents where juveniles involved). Stronger policing of PSPOs, with more use made of Dispersal Orders etc.” *BID/BCRP*

“Ability to easily issue a meaningful notice / order that prevents the individual from being present at the locations.” *Retailer*

“Give Police tools to move on and restrict access directly.” *Retailer*

“The criminal justice system needs to support the work BCRPs, businesses and police do. We get let down by them. No consequences for young people carrying knives and terrorise businesses.” *BID/BCRP*



Request for new powers

There was a request for more powers to be given to private security. The Community Safety Accreditation Scheme ([Home \(policecsas.com\)](http://policecsas.com)) offers a solution in this regard, but with the legislation now over 20 years' old the NBCC are pushing for a review to see how it can better support local communities given the current challenges.

“More engagement / funding for CSAS suppliers to allow elements of self-policing for ASB. CSAS in general is cost prohibitive, there are not enough CSAS trainers and they are too South focused. Real backing of this scheme would allow the security industry to do more to support the police.” *Security provider*

“If the 'state' cannot provide a service, allow BIDs/properly constituted town centre management schemes (not councils!) to access unspent police staffing budgets for commission of private policing. We cannot wait for 3 years for a solution. Within 2 weeks of the BID I manage commissioning private policing, we have made a massive impact.” *BID/BCRP*

“More powers as Security to respond and hold young offenders.” *Security provider*

“To give security sectors more powers to deal with the situation, and additional training on how to deal with a situation.” *Security provider*

“Security industry enforcement powers and rights to detain in lieu of Police arrival. With structured training and Licensing to ensure fewer abuses a of any given powers.” *Security provider*

“Increase powers to security especially when directly employed by a local authority.” *Security provider*

“Give the police and street bid rangers more powers to move on homeless/beggars and large groups of youths.” *Security provider*

“More power for centre security and store managers around up holding banning orders, making them more powerful, with the threat of court if broken.” *Retailer*

“Security industry enforcement powers and rights to detain in lieu of Police arrival.” *Security provider*

“More powers for shopping centres to exclude repeat offenders.” *Retailer*



Partnership working

There was a clear recognition that many of the ASB issues highlighted were not simply down to the police to resolve, particularly where there were social challenges such as with homelessness.

“Higher focus on homelessness and mental, these areas are clearly not being given the priority that they should be getting.” *BID/BCRP*

“Address the homeless problem with outreach programmes & signposting to charities.” *Retailer*

“Gov needs to provide better services.” *Retailer*

“More powers and support in moving on rough sleepers. We routinely refer them to charities and sources of support, but we notice a number of them choose to remain or choose to sleep rough despite having a fixed address. Soup kitchens need to be established away from retailers to avoid drawing them to our location.” *Retailer*

“Neighbourhood police teams to work in collaboration with security and business to tackle the issue both for an immediate improvement, but also a long term prevention strategy to reduce re-occurrence (location/area/site specific). We have developed such a collaboration very recently which is in progress.” *Security provider*

“Multi-agency interactions with intelligence gathering, sharing & intervention.” *Security provider*

“Create better rough sleeping shelters with enticements to encourage people off of the streets.” *BID/BCRP*

“Working with young troubled families to prevent some children growing up with issues and drug addictions, more work in early years preventative, so people grow up responsible and good citizens.” *BID/BCRP*

4. Summary

The responses to the survey has set out a number of challenges for the police and its partners to address the business concerns around anti-social behaviour. With a tough economic climate it's important that support is put in place to ensure that businesses can operate effectively and that customers feel safe so as to support those businesses and the communities they support.



The NBCC have shared the results of the survey with colleagues from across policing and government, so that responses to dealing anti-social behaviour can better reflect the concerns raised in the survey.

The following sets out where the NBCC can help support businesses. The Government have produced an ASB Action Plan, which addresses many of the areas highlighted in the survey.

The Action Plan is available here: [Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612227/ASB_Action_Plan.pdf)

Police response

The NBCC recognise the impact that ASB has on its business and its employees. When businesses feel that reports have not been met with the response they expect, they should consider the Community Trigger. The Case Review or “community trigger” gives victims suffering ASB the opportunity to ask agencies for a review of their case where they believe they have not had a satisfactory response. The Police aren’t always the most appropriate solution, and this is recognised in the legislation with the community trigger also applying to other agencies such as Local Authorities, Health, and Housing Providers.

[Community Triggers \(nbcc.police.uk\)](https://nbcc.police.uk/community-triggers)

Perception of ASB

When cases do reach court it’s also really important to articulate to the courts the impact the behaviour has had on the business and staff; the Impact Statement for Business has been designed to do exactly this.

[ASB - Impact Statement for Business \(ISB\) \(nbcc.police.uk\)](https://nbcc.police.uk/impact-statement-for-business)

Reporting

Reporting of incidents such as crime and ASB is critically important as it helps the police understand what is happening, when and where. There will always be occasions whereby the police don’t attend, but this doesn’t mean that nothing is happening, by logging the incident the police are able to map the location of incidents and develop effective crime prevention responses.

[Reporting a Crime \(nbcc.police.uk\)](https://nbcc.police.uk/reporting-a-crime)

The issue of reporting has also been recognised by the Home Office in the ASB Action Plan with a commitment to develop a digital one-stop-shop where people can



report anti-social behaviour to the right local responders and get feedback on the response.

Existing legislation

There is a range of ASB legislation already provided under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

The NBCC has designed a new page for their website which includes a wide range of guidance materials designed to help businesses tackle anti-social. The page includes guidance around the Community Trigger and tactical options such as Community Protection Warnings and Notices.

[Anti-social behaviour \(nbcc.police.uk\)](http://nbcc.police.uk)

The NBCC will continue to monitor the progression of the Home Office ASB Action Plan and will develop new guidance where needed.

New Powers

The value of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) has also been recognised with consultation released to assess the value of extending ASB powers to CSAS trained staff. Further details of CSAS can be found here: www.policecsas.com

