# JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION
## PROPOSAL REGISTRATION FORM

### Project title
An Evaluation of the Use and Impact of Dispersal Orders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total cost of project (inc. VAT)</th>
<th>Length of project</th>
<th>Anticipated start date (if known)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£50,891</td>
<td>15 months</td>
<td>1 April 2006</td>
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### MAIN PROPOSER

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Professor ???</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>University of Leeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Centre for Criminal Justice Studies, School of Law (Where applicable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>20 Lyddon Terrace</td>
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<td>Leeds</td>
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### OTHER PROPOSERS

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Please indicate the geographical area/s where your research will take place

| England | X | N. Ireland | Scotland | Wales | Non UK |

Please indicate where you first heard about this programme:

<table>
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<th>Email notification by JRF</th>
<th>Notification by academic organisation</th>
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<td>Accessing JRF website direct</td>
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<td>Personal contact</td>
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<td>Other (please state)</td>
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Aims

The aims of this research are to:

- understand the extent to which dispersal orders help address the problems which give rise to their implementation.
- provide an understanding of the processes involved in implementing dispersal orders and identify good practice.
- assess the impact of the use of dispersal orders and their effectiveness in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.
- explore the role and use of dispersal orders in regulating anti-social behaviour in the context of, and in relation to, other ASB related preventative and law enforcement interventions.

These aims will be explored through two local case studies and the collection of national data. In the case studies three main perspectives will be explored with regard to the process and challenges of implementation and perceptions of effectiveness:

- the views of police, housing managers and other relevant agencies;
- the attitudes of local residents and businesses and
- young people living in and using the case study areas, their views and experiences.

The research will evaluate the use of dispersal orders in New Easwick and simultaneously place this in a wider context, drawing national and inter-site comparisons. It is anticipated that this
comparative dimension will provide fuller and more rigorous insights into the working of dispersal orders.

**Background**

ASB has a significant impact on the lives of a minority of people in Britain. According to the British Crime Survey public anxieties about ASB, low level incivilities and youth nuisance appear to be growing. The percentage of people perceiving young people as a problem increased from 20% to 31% between 1992 and 2004/5 (Nicholas *et al.* 2005).

The regulation of anti-social behaviour (ASB) notably amongst young people has become a major policy issue of relevance to diverse local organisations and businesses (Burney 2005). In particular, ASB has become a defining concern of housing management (Flint 2006). Research from the New Deal for Communities (NDC) national evaluation identified that devising effective interventions to deal with the problem of ASB has become a major priority for NDC practitioners (Blandy *et al.* 2003). Over half of the NDCs stated that problems caused by young people were linked to ASB. Respondents identified large groups of people hanging out in public areas and behaving in an intimidating and harassing manner as a cause for concern.

Research shows that in local neighbourhoods, people are mainly concerned with three issues: general misbehaviour by children and young people, visible drug and alcohol misuse; and neighbour disputes and ‘problem families’ (Millie *et al.* 2005). Groups of young people congregating in public spaces are often seen as threatening and contribute to other people’s anxieties.

In 2003 government launched its ‘anti-social behaviour agenda’ (Home Office 2003), supported at the national level by an Antisocial Behaviour Unit. Established within the Home Office in January 2003, the Unit has a remit to co-ordinate and develop a new approach to tackling ASB. It preceded the Antisocial Behaviour Act which became law later that year. More recently, this initiative was extended through the Respect Action Plan in which the government spelt out its intention to go ‘broader, deeper and further’ in its campaign against anti-social behaviour (Home Office 2006).
In recent years a variety of new orders have been introduced to assist in tackling the problem of ASB, including: Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs), parenting orders and fixed penalty notices for disorder as well as dispersal orders. Recent figures show that these new powers are being used extensively around the country. Approximately 6,500 ASBOs had been granted since they were introduced up to June 2005, supplemented by some 13,000 ABCs, and over 170,000 fixed penalty notices for disorder issued in the 2 years to the end of 2005 (Home Office 2006: 6).

Despite these significant innovations little is known about their effectiveness and impact or the manner in which they relate to each other. Recent research shows that most local authorities draw from this portfolio of powers in a combination of enforcement and prevention strategies (Millie et al. 2005), but less is known about the manner in which a given power, such as the dispersal order, supplements other ASB powers and how these are perceived by different audiences within communities.

The Dispersal Order

Part four of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 (Ss. 30-36) provides the police, working jointly with local authorities, new powers to designate an area where they can disperse groups if delegated officers have reasonable grounds for believing that their presence or behaviour has resulted, or is likely to result in a member of the public being harassed, intimidated, alarmed or distressed. It needs to be demonstrated that ASB is a persistent problem before an area can be designated for the use of dispersal orders. Designation last for up to 26 weeks. In a Dispersal Order area, the police can direct individuals congregating in groups of two or more to leave the area and exclude them from said area for a period of up to 24 hours. If an individual is dispersed and returns to the area within 24 hours, the order has effectively been breached and can lead to arrest. Young people under the age of 16 found to be unsupervised on the streets in the designated area between the hours of 9 pm and 6 am can be taken to their place of residence by the police. The order came into force nationally in January 2004.
The Home Office conducted two sweeps of a survey of all police forces in England and Wales to collect information on the use of dispersal orders. Between January 2004 and June 2005 some 809 areas had been designated for dispersal orders from the 42 police forces that responded (not all forces responded to both sweeps). In addition, several forces provided a nil response because they do not collect data, they had not designated any areas or they were not able to provide data for both survey sweeps. The survey shows a highly variable use of dispersal orders in relation to the areas designated, the period of designation, the grounds for designation and the number of people dispersed (Home Office 2005). In total it was estimated that 14,375 people had been dispersed from the 293 areas for which data was collected.

Dispersal orders are particularly aimed as dealing with groups of young people who may be or appear to be threatening. The order combines enforcement with prevention, by excluding people from certain areas for up to 24 hours. Inevitably the order raises important issues about the use of public spaces, exclusion and acceptable behaviour. A key aspect of their effectiveness will concern the manner in which the implementation of dispersal orders is interpreted and experienced by young people who may be subject to dispersal. Compliance, it is suggested, will be conditioned by perceptions of procedural fairness. Research shows that judgements about the institutional and personal legitimacy of policing personnel are crucial to why people obey the law and comply with decisions taken (Tyler 1990).

To date there has been very little detailed evaluation of the value and impact of dispersal orders as a means of reducing anti-social behaviour. A small scale study of East Manchester highlighted some of the advantages and challenges of the new power (Smithson 2004). It found four broad perceptions among local people to the use of dispersal orders: (i) the order was perceived to be effective; (ii) the order was perceived to be ineffective because young people did not take any notice of it; (iii) young people should be left alone; and (iv) it is the responsibility of parents to know what they are doing.
The purpose of this research is to provide detailed insights into the use, impact and reception of dispersal orders with significant implications for wider policy and practice.

**Policy and practice relevance**

Given the lack of detailed information about the use and impact of dispersal orders, this study will provide important insights relevant to several national policy agendas and local practitioners. Locally, the findings will inform the work of the police, housing managers and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

**Research design**

The research will have both a local and national focus. It will analyse the use and impact of dispersal orders in two case study sites and collect national data on the use of dispersal orders.

The **national context** will be explored through a review of policy documents and a number of interviews with key practitioners and policy-makers around the country. Relevant interviewees will be selected from identified institutions including the Home Office, ASB Unit, ODPM, ACPO and the Youth Justice Board.

The **local contexts** will be examined through two in-depth case studies. In each site the use of dispersal orders will be tracked over a six month period of implementation and then an equivalent post-implementation period. The two sites will be:

1. **New Earswick**, York, where a dispersal order will be in force from 1st April 2006 until 30th September 2006. Data will also be collected in relation a second dispersal order being implemented at the same time in the York area on the border of the Heworth and Huntington Wards.

2. A site (to be arranged) possibly in the West Yorkshire Police force area. This site will be identified in an area where a dispersal
order will be implemented for the first time commencing between April and June 2006.

Data Collection

In both of the main fieldwork sites the following data will be collected:

- Police recorded crime data by month for 3 periods of time – (i) the 2 years prior to implementation, (ii) the six months of implementation and (iii) the 6 months post implementation. This data will be disaggregated for the dispersal zone area and neighbouring areas, in order to identify any displacement or diffusion of benefit effects.

- Police records of the numbers of calls made by residents regarding juvenile nuisance. This data will be broken down in the same manner as recorded crime data (above).

- Police use of dispersal order powers – (i) the number of occasions on which an officer disperses a group of 2 or more people, (ii) the size of the group and (iii) the number of occasions on which a youth (under 16) is escorted to their home and other relevant information obtained.

- Police activity records – to provide a picture of the impact of dispersal orders on more general policing activity in each site (notably stops, searches, arrests, etc)

- Recorded use of other ASB measures – namely ASBOs, ABCs, fixed penalty notices for disorder – from police and local authority/housing managers.

- Housing and local authority records abut calls relating to nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

- Interviews with relevant police personnel and managers.

- Interviews with housing managers, ASB coordinators, Youth Offending Service staff, councillors, relevant local authority and CDRP officers.
• Focus group and individual interviews with young people – if possible a survey of young people attending a local school will be conducted (administered through the school).

• Focus group interviews with selected residents drawn from neighbourhood watch and residents forums.

• Postal survey of residents – to be sent out approximately 1-2 months after the end of the dispersal order.

• Observation of policing – of approximately 40 hours per site of overt observation of the policing of dispersal orders.

The Research Team

This project will be conducted in the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies in the School of Law at the University of Leeds. The Centre has an international reputation for excellence in policy-relevant research, including in the fields of policing and drugs. The study will be led by Professor ???, in collaboration with ????. One full-time researcher will be recruited to work on the study.

The research team are familiar with history of policing and anti-social behaviour in the New Easwick area, having completed an extensive study of an earlier community policing initiative by which a contracted community police officer was dedicated to work within the village (Crawford et al. 2003). The team are in a position to draw upon the data collected in the earlier study by way of background information.

Timetable

The research fieldwork will run over 12 month period from 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2006 to 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2007. Initial findings will be presented to a feedback workshop to be held at JRF headquarters in York in April 2007. A final report will be submitted by 31\textsuperscript{st} June 2007.

Staffing
This project will be conducted by a team based in the Centre for Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Leeds. It will necessitate the employment of a research officer for the 12 month fieldwork period. The research officer will be responsible for collecting the data from the two case study sites. The research officer will be managed by ??? and ??? who will identify and arrange access in relation to the second site and prepare the research instruments. They will also assist in the collection of the national data and will be responsible for analysing the data and writing the final report. The research officer will receive close supervision and support. Regular team meetings will be held.

| PI                      | - Project management  
|                        | - Line management of researcher  
|                        | - National data collection and interviews  
|                        | - Preparation of research instruments  
|                        | - Analysing data and report preparation  
| Co-I                   | - Assist in management of researcher  
|                        | - National data collection and interviews  
|                        | - Preparation of research instruments  
|                        | - Analysing data and report preparation  
| Research officer       | - Collect data including individual and focus group interviews, survey and observations  
|                        | - Liaise with police and housing managers  
|                        | - Organise the fieldwork  
|                        | - Day-to-day management of the data  
|                        | - Assist in the analysis of the data  

The University will provide institutional support to the research team (office space, library resources and training).

**Dissemination**

The research will lead to several outputs and we will seek to disseminate these as widely as possible and in ways that will maximise their impact on policy and practice. Dissemination will include:
• A half-day feedback workshop for policy-makers, practitioners, academics (April 2006)
• JRF research report
• JRF Findings
• Article in peer-reviewed academic journals
• Shorter article in practitioner-focused publication
• Presentations at the British Society of Criminology conference July 2007 and other relevant conferences.

The final report will:

• provide an outline of the processes involved in implementing dispersal orders and identify good practice.
• reflect upon the extent to which dispersal orders help address the problems which give rise to their implementation.
• assess the impact of the use of dispersal orders and their effectiveness in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.
• seek to understand the role and use of dispersal orders in relation to other ASB interventions.
• assess perceptions of effectiveness on the part of (i) police and housing managers; (ii) local residents and retailers; and (iii) young people.

The Budget (below) does not include costs of dissemination.
References


Budget

Staff Costs:
Researcher at Level 1 for 12 months
(Grade 6b - starting salary of £ )

Recruitment of researcher

???

Equipment:
1 laptop

Travel & subsistence:
Local fieldtrips 60 @ average £15
National fieldtrips 10 @ £120

Survey costs:
Printing (+envelopes)
Postage

Direct administration/office expenses:
Consumables (recorder, tapes, batteries etc)
Phone
Transcription (90 hours @£15/hour)

Conference attendance, travel and accommodation x 2

TOTAL