THE NUFFIELD FOUNDATION
Application for Project grant – Summary details

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Title and summary of project
The impact of anti-social behaviour interventions on young people by place, ethnicity, gender and age

This research examines how ASB-related interventions for young people and their families direct young people away from and/or draw them into the youth justice system. Three key interventions - ASB warnings, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders – will be studied in the context of wider prevention and support work and also family change and youth transitions. The research will generate empirically-grounded understandings of decision-making processes and any differential impacts by mapping routes into, through, and away from youth justice; examining practitioners' views about using ASB interventions with different groups of young people; investigating the experiences of interventions as described by young people and their families; and exploring all explanations for any differences in use, experience or impact of interventions by place, ethnicity, gender and age. The study will collect quantitative and qualitative data from 6 purposively-selected areas with high concentrations of minority ethnic residents and well-developed ASB monitoring systems.

When would you like the grant to begin? 1st April 2008
When would you like the grant to end? 31st August 2010

Total amount requested from the Nuffield Foundation £197,390

Have you applied, or are you applying, elsewhere for funds for the project? Please give details
A differently focused and considerably larger research proposal was submitted to the ESRC in early 2007 (Ref: RES-062-23-0779). The proposal was Alpha-rated and supported by all referees and assessors, however, insufficient funds were available at the time to support the application. The current proposal has been significantly reworked and refocused. Furthermore, it will benefit from the ESRC funded research seminar series awarded in July 2007, entitled ‘Governing Through Anti-Social Behaviour’ (Ref: RES-451-26-0356).

Background
Anti-social behaviour (ASB) has become a major political concern and policy preoccupation in recent years, generating a range of new tools of intervention. These focus primarily on governing youth. The diverse new powers, orders and programmes have blurred traditional distinctions between civil and criminal (and also formal and informal) responses and radically reshaped ways of governing young people and their families. Implementation involves professionals with diverse organisational interests, working assumptions, priorities and approaches. The 26% increase in the number of young people criminalised in the period 2002-6, reported by the ex-Chairman of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) (Morgan 2007), is a worrying sign that the ASB agenda may be drawing more young people (earlier) into the youth justice system. At the same time, ASB interventions may provide tailored preventive responses to young people in trouble which address the wider causes of their offending and promote resilience within the family, school and community. Research has found a considerable ‘knowledge gap’ with regard to ASB and the implementation of new powers (NAO 2006). Little is known about the impact on different social groups or the wider implications of this reconfigured regulatory landscape.

This research will explore the extent to which novel ASB interventions assist young people and their families by promoting resilience and fostering desistence from offending and/or risk propelling them deeper into the youth justice system. A key aspect of the study will concern the interaction and interface between civil measures and criminal justice sanctions. The impact of ASB interventions will be mapped and analysed in terms of place, ethnicity, gender and age. Particular attention will be paid to the effects for different groups of young people on their transitions through youth.

The research will focus specifically on 3 key interventions - ASB warnings, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs). Whether (and which) young people subject to these interventions also encounter other prevention and support strategies including elements of the wider ASB ‘toolkit’ (e.g. Individual Support Orders or parenting contracts / orders) and other schemes (e.g. youth inclusion programmes, youth inclusion and support panels, family intervention projects, etc.) will also be explored. The study will generate new, empirically-grounded understandings of key decision-making processes and assess differential impacts. It will explore the assumptions about individual motivations and capacities embedded within theories of compliance that underpin the new measures. It will provide insights into the perceptions and experiences of young people and their parents of the effects and efficacy of interventions designed to change their behaviour.

Research shows that the broad and context-specific definition of ASB engenders considerable differences of measurement and meaning between agencies and across localities. This has produced significant local variations in the use of ASB measures (Home Office 2007). With regard to ethnicity, the Runnymede Trust expressed concern that ASBOs may have a disproportionate impact on minority ethnic groups, but deficiencies in ethnic monitoring bedevilled their efforts to explore this (Isal 2006). Likewise, the YJB concluded its report on ASBOs and young people by stating that it ‘could not explore differences between ethnic groups… this is therefore an area for further research’ (2006: 19). Moreover, little is known about how the use and impact of ASB interventions vary by gender and age. Work to understand the impact of key ASB interventions is needed to appreciate both the beneficial and the discriminatory nature of the ASB agenda and to advance equitable policy and practice.

The Nuffield Foundation is the most appropriate source of funding for this research as it requires genuine independence from government and an engagement with user communities and practitioners of the kind that Nuffield promotes (but the ESRC, for example, rarely invests in). The Public Accounts Committee report into tackling ASB recently noted the need for improved and standardised data collection systems and research into ‘the extent to which socioeconomic, geographic, ethnic, and age factors influence the outcomes achieved’ (PAC 2007: 5). An aspect of the proposed research will be to work with local practitioners in the designated sites to ensure that appropriate monitoring procedures and information gathering are in place to generate sufficiently robust data necessary for the study.

**Aim, objectives and outcomes**

The main aim is to identify the extent to which ASB interventions promote resilience among young people and their families, assisting them to navigate away from contact with formal institutions and/or...
drawing them into closer involvement in the youth justice system. Particular emphasis will be given to exploring variations in the use and impact of different interventions. The related objectives are to:

- Map the key decision points and routes into, through, and away from the youth justice system as shaped by these civil ASB interventions and the criminal sanctions that may ensue;
- Document the extent, nature and impact of prevention and support work undertaken with the subjects of these ASB interventions;
- Explore the views of key decision-makers about how these different ASB interventions promote good behaviour amongst young people;
- Examine the views of key decision-makers about the appropriateness and use of these different ASB interventions with different groups of young people;
- Explore the views of key decision-makers about the use and benefits of support strategies;
- Investigate experiences of these ASB interventions and any prevention and support work, and perceptions of their effectiveness and impact, as described by young people and their families;
- Examine all possible explanations for any observed trends or differences in the use, experience and impact of key ASB interventions, and prevention and support work, by place, ethnicity, gender and age.

The principal outcome will be an empirically grounded and conceptually rigorous commentary on the nature and impact of the ASB agenda with significant implications for policy and practice. In particular, any suggestion that the ASB agenda has a negative impact on young people in general, or a differential and discriminatory impact on some groups in particular, will have implications for the efficacy and equity of contemporary responses to ASB. Further, the improved and standardised ethnicity data collection systems developed in the designated sites will provide good practice models for other areas.

**Methods of data collection and analysis**

The research team will collect quantitative and qualitative data from 6 purposively selected core Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) areas with high concentrations of minority ethnic residents and well-developed ASB monitoring systems. Leeds CDRP has agreed in principle to collaborate in the research as one of the sites. Other sites will be located in London and the Midlands. Discussions with potential sites are underway. For each core site a socio-demographically matched comparator CDRP will be selected from which quantitative data will be obtained. The 6 sites will together provide a large body of quantitative data for analysis.

Background and contextual data will be collected in all 6 sites including crime rates, recorded ASB levels and audits of local policy documents, supplemented by interviews with ASB coordinators and retrospective statistics covering 2 years prior to the fieldwork on the use of ASB interventions with young people, where possible broken down by ethnicity, gender and age.

Central to the study will be the collection and analysis of **quantitative data** from CDRPs on young people subject to key ASB interventions in all 6 sites. The quantitative sample will comprise all young people (aged 10 to 17 years) given an ASB warning, ABC or ASBO during a 24 month period from 6 months before the fieldwork commences. In addition CDRP, youth offending team (YOT) and family intervention project records will be consulted to determine whether and what prevention and support work has been undertaken with these young people. This will allow examination of whether the use of key ASB interventions and orders for / referrals to prevention and support services varies between groups. Young people subject to a warning, contract or order during the first 12 months of the 24 month period will be **tracked forward** through the CDRP database over a subsequent 12 month period (from the date of the order/contract) to assess impact, individual trajectories and compliance. Records of all young people will be **tracked back** (through relevant databases and case files) to identify earlier interventions. The data will be coded and analysed using SPSS. The analysis will:

- Provide descriptive information about the characteristics of young people subject to key ASB interventions, particularly in relation to ethnicity, gender and age. The characteristics of those subject to these disposals will be compared with those of the local youth population. Any disproportionate representation by ethnicity, gender and age will also be explored during the qualitative research.
• Afford details of the length and nature of conditions attached to different disposals, and highlight variations by place, ethnicity, gender and age, which will be explored during the qualitative research.
• Afford detailed information about the nature and use of prevention and support strategies, and document variations between groups, the reasons for which will be explored qualitatively.
• Allow the mapping of pathways into or away from youth justice and the identification of variations by place, ethnicity and gender which will be examined qualitatively.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) will be used to map the use of key ASB interventions on the basis of postcode data. Evidence suggests that minority ethnic populations are more likely to reside in areas with higher levels of recorded crime and ASB. To disentangle the complex relationship between place and ethnicity, steps will be taken to map where the recipients of ASB interventions live using GIS. This will identify ASB ‘hotspots’ and official data will be used to determine whether the ethnicity of young people with ASB interventions mirrors that of these areas.

Detailed qualitative research will be undertaken in the 3 core sites. Semi-structured interviews with ASB decision-makers, young people and their parents will form a core part of this work. This method affords sufficient structure for comparison between interviewees whilst allowing the interviewer latitude to probe and seek clarification and elaboration on key points by entering into a dialogue with the respondent (May 2001: 123-4). Specifically, the qualitative research will comprise:

• Five semi-structured interviews in each of the 3 sites (15 in total) with key ASB decision-makers conducted at the start of the fieldwork period to provide contextual information (e.g. how, why and with whom decisions to intervene are taken, local definitions of ASB and policy priorities, local provision of prevention and support services, etc.). The interviews will be recorded and transcribed.
• Semi-structured interviews with 120 young people whose trajectories are being tracked through the quantitative research (40 in each area). The 40 interviewees in each site will include 8 males from each of the Black, White and Asian ethnic groups. A further 8 males will be selected as representatives of a significant minority group prevalent in the local population or disproportionately represented in the ASB statistics, allowing the research to move beyond traditional ethnic categories and to reflect local variations. The fifth group will comprise eight females, which broadly reflects the proportion of female youths given ASB interventions (NAO 2006). From each group an even distribution of young people at two different stages on intervention (ABC/formal warning and ASBO) will be chosen. Young people will be asked about their experiences of different agencies, the context of their behaviour and their motivations and capacity to change. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. The transcripts will be analysed using a system of open, axial and selective coding (Strauss 1987) to identify key themes. Whether coding will be done manually or electronically will be decided at a later stage. Interviewees will receive a small financial payment in recognition of their contribution to the study (£15).
• Semi-structured interviews with the parents of 15 of the young people interviewed in each area (45 in total) to supplement and corroborate the interviews with their children. The methods of data collection and analysis will mirror those used with juveniles. A small financial payment will be made (£20) and provision had been made in the budget for interpreters to be present at ten interviews if necessary.
• Ten observations of key decision-making meetings (e.g. ASB panels, case conferences, meetings to agree an ABC/ASBO) in each site (30 in total) to study the decision-making process and factors that determine which measure is chosen. Observations will be recorded on a pro forma observation schedule.
• Group interviews (15 in total) with ASB practitioners from social housing, CDRP, police, YOT, CPS and family intervention projects in each site. These will examine the views of different groups of decision-makers about how the different ASB interventions promote good behaviour and the appropriateness of different ASB interventions. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed.
• Ten semi-structured interviews in each of the core sites (30 in total) with key ASB decision-makers from different agencies, conducted towards the end of the fieldwork period, to examine patterns in the use of ASB interventions by place, ethnicity, gender and age. The planned timetable is as follows:

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>01.04.08 – 30.09.08 (6 months)</td>
<td>Complete preparation/design work, notably finalise data recording &amp; collection methods with CDRPs &amp; employ</td>
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Theoretical Framework for Analysis

Whilst all interventions designed to affect behaviour ultimately rest upon suppositions about compliance, these are rarely made explicit in general policy debates or in individual instances of decision-making. Opening up this decision-making ‘black box’ is particularly relevant given the diverse choices available to professionals regarding responses to ASB. These choices and tools are informed by divergent assumptions about personal and group motivations, values, capacities and competencies. ASB interventions have refigured routes into criminal justice not simply in terms of new pathways but also in relation to the different theories of compliance upon which they rest. They have displaced the traditional emphasis upon deterrence through the risk of coercive sanction imposed by detached legal authorities with ideas of ‘regulated self-regulation’, reward, persuasion and reciprocity or exchange, and processes that foreground participation and parental, as well as community, involvement. The forms of ‘contractual governance’ (Crawford 2003) found in ABCs and parenting contracts, for example, appeal to very different notions of both instrumental and normative compliance compared to traditional court-imposed punishments. In exploring the implications of the diverse ASB measures, this research will analyse the (implicit) theories of compliance upon which interventions seek to operate and the manner in which they embody questions of cultural, ethnic, local, gendered and age-related differences. It will interrogate policies regarding the deployment of different ‘tools’ and local practices in terms of their assumptions about the conditions under which compliance might be fostered. This lens will offer important insights into understandings of differential treatment and possible forms of unwarranted discrimination. It will afford insights into potential ‘processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people’ (Macpherson 1999: s. 6.34). Simultaneously, the analysis will be sensitive to the kinds of differential treatment and/or outcomes that may arise as a result of practices that are ‘objectively justified by a legitimate aim’ as envisaged by the European Race Directive.

Potential challenges and proposed solutions

The main problem anticipated is the potentially poor quality (or absence) of ethnicity data collected by CDRPs, as noted in several studies (YJB 2006; Isal 2006; NAO 2006; PAC 2007). It is anticipated that the recommendations from these influential reports will have helped encourage a climate in which CDRPs (in conjunction with partners) will consider collecting better quality data. We propose working with all 6 CDRPs to devise systems to allow the subjects of ASB interventions to indicate their ethnic background using the Office for National Statistics’ 16+1 system of ethnic classification. Specifically:

- A simple pro forma will be designed by the research team for use by ASB professionals with the young people in the quantitative sample. The pro forma will explain the purpose of the research and ask young people to indicate their ethnicity according to the 16+1 system.

- The research team will agree systems with the CDRPs to ensure that the data are collected. Initial ABC meetings or final ‘signing off’ contact as well as ongoing interactions between ASBO recipients and the YOT, may provide opportunities for data collection. (Whilst the quantitative data set includes those given an ABC or ASBO in the 6 months preceding the start of the fieldwork these interventions will be ‘ongoing’ as ABCs usually run for 6 months and ASBOs for at least 2 years, allowing the ethnicity data to be collected at the end of an ABC or during an ASBO. Ways of securing ethnicity data for the recipients of formal ASB warnings will be explored).

An initial 6-month period for the purpose of access negotiation has been deliberately built into the research. During this period necessary protocols and data collection systems will be agreed with the CDRP sites and the Advisory Board (see below). We will seek to exploit the current policy momentum and request the assistance of relevant Advisory Board members to facilitate access and convince any reluctant CDRPs of the long-term benefits of robust ethnic monitoring.
Advisory Board

An Advisory Board will be drawn from members of the ESRC funded research seminar series ‘Governing through Anti-Social Behaviour’ which will start in November 2007 and run for approximately 18 months. Prof. Crawford is the grant holder and organiser of the seminar series. Seminar series members who will be invited to join the Board include the following practitioners/policy makers: Steve Carr (Cardiff City Council); Sarah Isal (Runnymede Trust); Peter Jackson (Social Landlords Crime & Nuisance Group); Liz Levy (Scottish Executive); Andy Mills (Safer Leeds); Alison Parsons (Birmingham City Council) and Nisha Patel (YJB); together with the following academics: Sarah Blandy (Leeds); Elizabeth Burney (Cambridge); John Flint (Sheffield Hallam); Mike Hough (King’s College); Gordon Hughes (Cardiff); Lesley Mecara (Edinburgh); Judy Nixon (Sheffield Hallam); David Prior (Birmingham) and Peter Squires (Brighton). In addition, Marc Verlot (Commission for Racial Equality) and representatives of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights and the Home Office or Respect Task Force will be invited to join. The Board will act as a source of advice and counsel and serve to raise the profile of the research. Two dedicated meetings of the Board are envisaged, at the start and towards the end of the research. The first meeting will consider the research strategy, notably ethical, methodological and data collection issues and strategies to overcome challenges. The final meeting will consider the draft findings and dissemination strategy. Board members will be updated of progress via the ongoing research seminar series and electronic bulletins.

Ethical considerations

The research team is committed to following the Social Research Association ethical guidelines. The informed consent of participants will always be sought. This requires researchers to make explicit the nature of the research, its purpose, funding source and any dissemination plans. We will explain that participants have the right to refuse to participate, and that all possible steps will be taken to maintain confidentiality and of any exceptions. Particular attention will be paid to the needs of young people involved in the study and steps will be taken to ensure that young potential interviewees are equipped to give informed consent to participate. If there is any suggestion (e.g. from the researcher or any practitioner with knowledge of the individual) that they can not give informed consent proxy consent may be sought from a parent, guardian or other competent adult. This does not override the young person’s right to refuse to participate, however. Confidentiality of participants will be assured through the anonymisation of data. The storage and use of data will comply with the Data Protection Act 2001, the Human Rights Act, and the University of Leeds’ Coded of Practice on Data Protection. The research will comply with the guidance and governance of the University’s Committee on Ethics and Experimental and Practical Procedures. Within this framework, and in line with Nuffield’s requirement that research involving human subjects is subject to independent ethical scrutiny, the proposal will be submitted for approval to the appropriate Research Ethics Committee at Leeds. The University’s policy of research integrity is available at: http://www.leeds.ac.uk/research/hbook/integ1.htm

Evaluation

A decisive factor in the success of the research will derive from the quality of the quantitative data that the research is able to collect. This will be facilitated by: (i) the initial period of negotiation with all research sites; and (ii) working with local managers to ensure that appropriate data collection systems, where not already in place, are developed and implemented. More broadly the Advisory Board will be used as a sounding board to ensure that the research develops according to its aims, objectives and data collection timetable. The Advisory Board will play a major role in providing independent evaluation of the draft final report and subsequent plans for dissemination and allied outcomes.

Dissemination and outputs

The research aims to identify the differential impacts of the ASB agenda, highlight the assumptions, practices and procedures that cause such differentiation and provide lessons for good policy and practice. The appropriate audiences will be those organisations and individuals who seek to ensure that public policies are both effective and equitable with regard to their impacts on diverse social and ethnic groups. Hence the research will be of considerable value to policy-makers and practitioners keen to develop policy and practice that does not unwittingly discriminate on the grounds of place, ethnicity,
gender and age. The research may also be expected to inform the work of organisations that strive to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination and protect human rights, such as the Commission for Racial Equality and the Commission for Equality and Human Rights. The findings should inform debates on the appropriate balance between concerns for equality and diversity on the one hand and security and order on the other and hence be of interest to the Home Office, Department of Communities and Local Government, the YJB and the Respect Taskforce.

Given the relevance of the research findings to policy-makers, practitioners and academics the dissemination period of the research will be of particular importance. This will occur over two distinct phases. The first phase will be the internal dissemination of initial findings at two meetings (in Leeds and London) to which practitioners from the 6 participating sites will be invited. At these meetings the team will present the initial research findings and discuss their implications for local policy and practice. These meetings will also enrich the writing-up process by allowing participants to reflect on the findings, correct any misperceptions of their work and provide new insights into the research data.

The second phase will involve the external dissemination of the findings. Given the significant potential to influence policy, change practice and inform academic debate, a national dissemination conference will be organised at a central London venue to present the findings to a national audience of key practitioners, policy-makers, researchers and government representatives. A brief and digestible 4-page summary Findings will be made publicly available at the conference and media briefings prepared to maximise the impact of the research. Advisory Board members will be invited to contribute to the dissemination by way of commenting on the implications for policy and practice. The research will subsequently be disseminated through academic and practitioner conference presentations, peer reviewed academic journals and a full-length report or research monograph.

Staff duties
Professor will have overall managerial responsibility for the research. He will be responsible for the design of the research tools; negotiating access; initial set-up interviews with key stakeholders; oversight of data analysis; liaising with the Advisory Board; organising the dissemination meetings / conference and presentation of findings; preparing the Findings report and subsequent publications. He will supervise and coordinate the research team through regular team meetings (one per fortnight) and progress reports. Given the extensive managerial demands across a number of sites, particularly with regard to data negotiation, personnel management and data analysis, it is envisaged that the project will require at least 1 day per week of his time. Dr. will lead the collection and analysis of statistical data across all 6 sites and be responsible for collecting qualitative data from one core site. She will assist in the negotiation of access; the preparation of research tools; shadowing and assisting the Research Assistant (RA) in the initial periods; qualitative data coding and analysis, and contribute to all other aspects of the project and report writing. Dr. ’s experience and skills with collecting, collating and analysing quantitative data are invaluable for the success of this project. As the research cannot expect to employ a research officer with the requisite skills, it is vital that Dr provides significant time to the collection and analysis of the quantitative data.

The RA will be responsible for gathering qualitative data from the remaining two core research sites, which will include conducting interviews with young people, parents and decision-makers and observing key meetings. S/he will also assist with the quantitative data collection. S/he will provide regular reports to the team, code and analyse the qualitative data (with guidance), and contribute to the quantitative analysis, report preparation and other aspects of the project. A.N.Other will provide expertise in converting the quantitative data held by CDRPs and other agencies into a suitable form, managing and manipulating large data files, writing SPSS syntax and interpreting the results of statistical analysis. Assistance with GIS mapping will come from the School of Geography at the University of Leeds where staff specialise in GIS mapping techniques. As the project is employing only one dedicated full-time RA it is envisaged that both Prof and Dr will contribute to the qualitative data collection notably interviews with practitioners and key decision-makers.

NB: Whilst the project is envisaged over a period of 26 months we have budgeted key staff time only over a 24 month period, representing an overall reduction in the total cost.