

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

3. In March 2003 the Government published a white paper outlining its proposals for tackling anti-social behaviour. *Respect and Responsibility – taking a stand against anti-social behaviour* focussed on providing local authorities and the police with a wider, more flexible range of powers to meet their existing responsibilities and respond to the needs of their local communities.
4. The Act is designed to ensure that the police have the appropriate powers to deal with serious anti-social behaviour. It introduces new powers for tackling the problem of premises used for drug dealing and for dispersing intimidating groups. It enables the police to tackle the nuisance that can be caused by young people with air weapons, and supports action against gun crime by banning the possession of imitation guns and air guns in public without good reason. It also tackles the danger of air weapons that can be easily converted to be used with conventional ammunition. It also amends existing police powers to place conditions on public assemblies, deal with illegal raves and to deal with unauthorised encampments.
5. The Act also provides powers for local authorities and those working with them to tackle anti-social behaviour in local communities. It extends landlords' powers to deal with anti-social behaviour in social housing, including developing the use of injunctions and demoted tenancies. It also includes provisions aimed at dealing with noise nuisance. It develops the sanctions that are available for use against those who engage in anti-social behaviour and extends the range of agencies that can use them. It provides a means for schools, local authorities and youth offending teams to work with the parents of children who are behaving anti-socially and creates the mechanisms for enforcing this work. The Act extends local authorities' powers in relation to cleaning land. It extends the measures that can be taken to remove graffiti, and restricts the sale of aerosol paint to children. The Act also gives local authorities powers to intervene in disputes over high hedges.
6. The Act is in ten Parts. Part 1 creates new powers to close premises that are being used for drug dealing or use. Part 2 extends powers for tackling anti-social behaviour in social housing. Part 3 develops mechanisms for enforcing parental responsibility for children who behave in an anti-social way in school or in the community. Part 4 creates a new power for the police to designate areas where they can disperse groups causing intimidation. Part 5 deals with the misuse of air weapons. Part 6 extends powers for local authorities to clean the environment. Part 7 amends police powers for dealing with public assemblies and trespassers. Part 8 provides new powers for local authorities to intervene in disputes regarding high hedges. Part 9 develops the existing sanctions of anti-social behaviour orders, fixed penalty notices and supervision orders. Part 10 contains general provisions.