Project Name:

Operation Alamein – Tackling Youth Nuisance and embryonic gang culture

Location:

The villages of Edlington & Warmsworth, Doncaster, South Yorkshire

Summary:

Edlington & Warmsworth are adjacent villages in Doncaster with a combined population of approximately 11,000 persons, 97% white British. There has been much investment since the closure of coalmines in 1985 and there has always been a degree of antisocial behaviour and criminality. From October 2008 to February 2009 there was an unprecedented increase in anti-social behaviour and signal crime. Embryonic gang culture also emerged with reports of concern from a numerous stakeholders.

Edlington SNT was doing many correct things to address key national indicators to reduce crime and anti social behaviour. Relevant tools and powers were used and working closely with partner agencies and third sector groups. Why was embryonic gang culture emerging and it appeared that a vital component was missing. The key to really understanding the problem was to carry out an effective youth survey. Utilising the problem analysis triangle we identified the extent of the problem and causation. To understand the relationship between geography and the location of anti social behaviour Police analysts were commissioned.

Operation Alamein began on the 4th April 2009 and progressed into 2010. After thorough analysis the response phase was broken into three key themes: Enforcement, Target Acquisition and Diversionary Activities. These actions were specifically adopted to address the actions identified with the problem analysis triangle giving primary focus to location and offenders. Evaluation was a continuous process with regular partner meetings linking with CDRP, Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) and Partners And Communities Together (PACT) groups. Particular emphasis was given to working with young school councils giving them a voice and actually writing in their suggestions into the response phase.

Assessment and evaluation were dynamic processes conducted throughout the operation to ensure partners remained focused and to address changes or developments. Measurement was by simple comparison of results before and after the response phase using the same criteria and comparative dates. In terms of nuisance youths we confirmed that we were very successful in reducing this category by 22% exceeding the 10% target. Of more significance was that 32 of those named on our top 40 list were no longer coming to the attention of the authorities or were responding very well to intervention.

Word Count: 384
Scanning

Edlington & Warmsworth are adjacent villages in Doncaster with a combined population of approximately 11,000, 97% of which are categorised as white British. There has been much investment since the closure of coalmines in 1985 and there has always been a degree of antisocial behaviour and criminality. From October 2008 to February 2009 there was an unprecedented increase in anti-social behaviour and signal crime. Embryonic gang culture also emerged with reports of concern from a numerous stakeholders.

Appendix A shows a map of Edlington and Warmsworth in relation to Doncaster.

Local schools reported to the Police and Council incidents of anti-social behaviour and criminality amongst young people before and after school, against school property and individual teachers and staff, culminating with three major arson incidents and a petrol bomb under a staff members car. This was recorded on partnership databases. Evidence emerged that young people were involved in the incidents, this led to considerable moral panic regarding young people in the area.

Police & Council reports suggested a significant increase in aggression and disrespect to youth workers and Police in the area. Personal cars were attacked, the police station was stoned. Attitudes amongst normally quite approachable young people hardened.

Youth groups were reported on the streets and key leaders observed. Young people were getting involved in illegality when normally they were well behaved. Graffiti increased as did gang information on social networking sites that was shown to the Police by the Neighbourhood Watch. Group. Identities such as the ‘Edlington Bad Boy Crew’, ‘Edlington Boys’ and ‘Warmy Bong Squad’ were found. This was really out of character for the area and the young people involved.

The Fire Service submitted regular reports of anti-social behaviour and bin fires in the area with evidence captured on the onboard camera systems and reported to partners.

Tesco Stores and other retailers reported to the Police and Council repeat damage, drinking, violence and threats outside the shops particularly on the main street on Edlington Lane; The Royal Housing Estate (which runs off Edlington Lane); Violet Avenue shops and to a lesser extent other areas causing great concern, problems employing staff, costs of repair and a feeling of lawlessness. (see maps in appendix A)

Residents and Community Groups reports were made regarding groups of young people seen roaming the streets drinking alcohol and causing damage. Numerous incidents were reported of groups of youths causing damage to fences and several rows of cars were damaged with paint stripper. Many residents also reported through community meetings, youth groups in hoods in the area drinking on the streets and conveyed a feeling that the authorities were not doing enough. Again the same names and ringleaders were mentioned.

Many young people expressed concerns regarding an escalation of anti-social behaviour in the monthly Schools Councils meetings. They feared that all would be “tarred with the same brush”.

The Tilley Awards and Home Office websites were studied for examples that were similar to the position in Edlington & Warmsworth. The ‘Birmingham Bringing Hope’ and ‘Enough is enough’ project in Lambeth, London provided appropriate examples of best practice to modify for local needs with both schemes realising a 20%
reduction in anti-social behaviour and gang activity in each area. Success factors appeared to include:

- Actions preceded by surveys.
- Multi-agency, co-ordinated approach.
- Community groups and young people directly involved with planning.
- Potential causes and risk factors identified and addressed.
- Understood gang culture and peer pressure.
- ‘Drivers’ of crime identified and targeted
- Best projects highly coordinated by Police, Local Authority and Youth Offending Services.
- Importance of getting the right message to young people.
- Understood the need for community updates.
- Understood reluctance to report matters.
- Co-ordinated enforcement where necessary

Typical behaviour
Specific enquiries with the stakeholder groups confirmed typical behaviour to include:

- Groups causing damage to shops
- Youths being abusive to shop keepers and other adults
- Drunken and rowdy behaviour on the streets
- Illegal motorcycle nuisance
- Graffiti and criminal damage

To tackle the problem it was agreed that multi-agency stakeholder focus should be placed upon pre cursor incidents that, if successfully addressed early enough, would prevent more serious crime. Our objectives therefore were:

- To reduce nuisance youth incidents by 10%
- To reduce nuisance motorcycling incidents by 10%
- To create & maintain sustainable working partnerships
- To eradicate embryonic gang culture before it takes hold

Analysis

History
Throughout the preceding year Edlington Safer Neighbourhood Team was working towards addressing key national indicators to reduce crime and anti social behaviour, utilising all relevant tools and powers and working closely with partner agencies and third sector groups. In April 2009, Rt Hon Caroline Flint MP referred to the team’s initial success by saying:

“Police numbers, visible patrolling, the best equipment, the right powers to tackle problems on the ground and good dialogue with the local community. This is key to bearing down on crime.”

We had to ask ourselves why was this embryonic gang culture was emerging and it appeared that a vital component was missing. The key to really understanding the problem was to carry out an effective youth survey. This had not been done before and was intended to compliment existing consultation measures such as:

- community/ third sector meetings
- Partners and Communities Together meetings
- SNT/ elected members surgeries
- Parish Council meetings
• Shopwatch/ Neighbourhood Watch forums

The noticeable gap was that young people rarely had their say; we wanted to give them a voice and an opportunity to participate in the planning, designing and implementation stage of Operation Alamein in order for it to be successful. The survey was based upon the adult survey ‘Your Voice Counts' and modified for a younger audience. It achieved a 50% return rate and provided a crucial young persons insight into the problems and causes and was captured on Police databases then shared amongst partners.

The scanning process enabled a clear understanding of the ‘drivers' behind anti social behaviour and the emergence of a gang culture, as can be found in Appendix B.

Problem Analysis Triangle

By application of the problem analysis triangle, we identified the extent of the problem and cause. To understand the relationship between geography and the location of anti social behaviour, police analysts were appointed to map out the problem areas.

Location

Analysis showed the Royal Estate is the major crime scene predominantly made up of private rented properties with many back alleys that are not well lit making it difficult to police as there are many escape routes. The Youth Service, the Youth Shelter and local TESCO’s shop are central to this area the later being open late and acting as a 'lure' for youths who congregate, drink, cause nuisance to staff and customers then disperse throughout the village from this point. Violet Avenue shops are a few hundred yards away. These areas were identified as major 'battlegrounds’ during the evening, where most nuisance youth and motorcycle nuisance occurred. Other areas were identified as lesser 'battlegrounds' or areas of displacement. The hotspots did also yield positive benefits with vital witness information from residents who were willing to take a stand.

See Appendix C for a hotspot map show incidents of antisocial behaviour.

Analysis indicated incidents were occurring each week day evening. Monday – Friday between 17:00hrs -22:00hrs. Friday being the most notorious day, peaking between 19:00hrs & 22:00hrs.

Actions to address in this area include:

• Multi-agency focus on key hotspots at appropriate times
• Crime prevention measures and target hardening for ‘rat runs'
• Consultation and reassurance measures in these areas

Offender

From April 08 to Dec 08 there were a total of 214 Nuisance Youth Reports and 45 incidents of nuisance motorcycles. The data can be found broken down by area and month in Appendix D.

We had considerable local knowledge from stakeholders and practitioners regarding who the offenders were. In most cases they were known to the authorities, however many were acting completely out of character. A number of active ring leaders who were much older were also identified. The majority were aged between 14 and 17 years old. Two ringleaders were aged 24yrs and 27yrs. Social website research
revealed a coordinated street gang mentality and group affinity. The coordination of young people by ringleaders and the escalation of ASB often completely out of character to the individual responsible was of great concern. We needed to understand why these young people were acting in such a way. The youth survey helped bridge an intelligence gap with a much summarised version included in Appendix E.

Further analysis revealed that just 40 identified young people were causing up to 80% of incidents. It was decided that a focussed approach would be more impactful than a scattergun approach. The Pareto Principle, a business model, if applied to the operation could focus on the 20% who offend giving rise to 80% of the incidents. The offenders appeared to be local with identified leaders.

Actions to address in this area include:

- Continue to bridge the intelligence gap and identify causes
- Identify and circulate the top 40 list of offenders
- Special focus for the leaders
- Multi-agency focus including enforcement and diversionary measures

Victims

- Private individuals
  Many private and council home owners fell victim to acts of random damage and graffiti by groups of youths. Some were subjected to abusive language. Very few were assaulted. All were disturbed by such escalation. Vehicles were damaged by missiles or paint stripper, numerous tyres were slashed. Off duty Council, School and Police Officers were targeted.

- Community buildings and commercial premises
  The local Tesco store was regularly targeted. The Youth Service buildings vandalised, the local secondary schools were subject to three major arson incidents and other community buildings were damaged. This impacted upon the local economy and gave an extremely negative impression of the area.

- The wider community
  Were effected negatively anyway but concurrently to this issues Edlington made National and International News and was focus to prolonged media attention during this period for the assault on two young boys which exacerbated the problem.

Actions to address this area include:

- Provide accurate information on progress
- Information share and regular evaluation with all partners
- Maximise restorative justice opportunities
- Maximise key prosecutions
- Maximise diversionary opportunities
- Provide opportunities for victims to express their concerns

Response

Operation Alamein began on the 4th April 2009 and progressed into 2010. After thorough analysis the response phase was broken into three key themes: Enforcement, Target Acquisition and Diversionary Activities. The following actions took place:
Please see Appendix F for examples of publications.

Enforcement

- Established two section 30 dispersal orders in Hotspot areas
- Deployed multi agency street based teams at specific times
- No nonsense arrest and prosecution policy
- Liaised with CPS to target & prosecute leaders and prolific offenders
- Worked closely with Youth Offending Services
- Focused on our top 40 following the 80/20 ‘pareto’ principle
- Deployed counter nuisance motorcycle surveillance patrols
- Worked with schools to information share and identify CCTV footage
- Special warning letters delivered to top 40 giving fair warning
- Maximised operational branding and publicity in the area
- Created enforcement boards and web pages for partners
- Deployed Bluetooth mobile phone messaging systems explaining actions
- Media campaign in local magazines, radio and web pages
- Multi agency estate walks with community representatives
- Work with local schools, schools council and children’s officers
- Displacement assessment and deployment
- Follow up action with YOS and Environmental Health teams
- Deployed shopwatch and truancy watch with Educational Welfare Officers
- Night Vision Equipment deployment
- Removal of gang identity by immediate graffiti removal by Council

Target Acquisition

- All partners contribute to a top 40 target photo list and disseminate
- Operation Alamein intranet page for partners info share
- Continuous evaluation and assessment of targets
- Referrals to supporting agencies regarding offenders
- Evaluation, communication & rewarding improvement and good behaviour
- Major investment in Police Station CCTV systems

Diversionary Activities

- High profile restorative justice graffiti clean up activities
- Established behaviour linked off road motorcycle youth projects
- Police & Youth Service sports activities during traditionally busy periods
- Drug Proofing courses for parents establishing local self help groups
- Third sector involvement including Tesco & Wates Construction
- Gala events and evening sports activities
- School patrols and drop in events with quad bikes
- Multi faith & schools council youth activities and planning consultation
- Architectural design improvements to alleyways on Royal Estate

These actions were specifically adopted to address the actions identified with the problem analysis triangle giving primary focus to location and offenders. Evaluation was a continuous process with regular partner meetings linking with Community Safety Partnership, Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) and Partners And Communities Together (PACT) groups. Particular emphasis was given to working with young school councils giving them a voice and incorporating their suggestions into the response phase.

Timeline for key events
Please see Appendix G for a timeline of events.

**Exit strategy**

Partners were briefed to look out for ASB and gang indicators and to report these during the evaluation meetings. Displacement featured quite significantly in these meetings and it was agreed that the diversionary measures could and should be sustained anyway. The target acquisition was maintained but we were quick to reinforce good behaviour where appropriate. The section 30 orders were allowed to expire allowing proportionality. There would be a gradual reduction in enforcement measures however; a template was now in place to respond to any escalation.

**Financial aspects**

Most activities were supported by partner agencies under normal duty budgets. The following expenditure was also incurred:

- £3000 from the Police for extra deployments
- £3300 from Doncaster Council for diversionary activities
- £15,000 from the Police for CCTV target hardening the Police Station
- £6000 Neighbourhood Watch, Tesco and the 3rd Sector for diversionary activities
- £250,000 from the Government’s Pathfinder scheme for architectural design improvements in the alleyways of the Royal Estate.

**Assessment**

Assessment and evaluation were dynamic processes conducted throughout the operation to ensure partners remained focused and to address changes or developments.

Measurement was by simple comparison of results before and after the response phase using the same criteria and comparative dates.

These statistics can be found in Appendix H.

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<th>Nuisance youth incidents</th>
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<td>April – December 2009</td>
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The chart in Appendix I shows the reduction of nuisance youth incidents comparing data from 2008 against the same period in 2009.

In terms of nuisance youths we confirmed that we were very successful in reducing this category by **22% exceeding the 10% target**. Of more significance was that 32 of those named on our top 40 list were no longer coming to the attention of the authorities and were responding very well to intervention.

We did not succeed with our motorcycle nuisance plans. We endured a **246% increase**. We believed that marketing of the initiative generated more calls and we seized 43 bikes which created additional incidents for each seizure. Notwithstanding these explanations it was a worrying development. Offender information indicated displacement from outside our area with motorcycles travelling along the Transpennine Trail from Barnsley, Wakefield and even Castleford (15 miles away). Very few seizures were from our own area. We reconsidered our strategy to address this unprecedented displacement.
The diversionary activities were extremely successful. Behaviour linked attendance and third sector support proved extremely effective. Over 165 young people took part in the quad biking and off road motorcycle training working with the Local Secondary School and the Princes trust. Not one of those taking part committed offences during these activities. Only 2 committed offences within 6 months of taking part in the activities.

This scheme featured in Motorcycle News magazine and has won a number of awards for proactive partnership working.

The night vision equipment and Bluetooth messaging systems were considered innovative and were positively reported on radio and local newspapers.

“Edlington SNT are the first to utilise night vision equipment on foot patrol. The equipment is similar to that used in Iraq. The shadows are no longer a hiding place. Edlington Neighbourhood Watch were so impressed they funded two more goggles.”

Doncaster Star (June 2009)

“We utilised Bluetooth messaging systems in the area to promote our plans and inform young people about Operation Alamein. The system sends a message to mobile phones clearly indicating an option to accept a message from the Police. The equipment registered 1500 accepted messages from young people with only 300 choosing to decline. This really helped get the message across and told us that a significant majority were confident to accept a message from the Police”

Live radio interview with Acting Sergeant Kirkham BBC Radio Sheffield (June 2009)

In terms of embryonic gang culture and associated graffiti there has been a very significant reduction. Within two months of the response aspect, four arrests were made regarding gang related graffiti and 12 young people were involved in a restorative justice initiative and were set to work cleaning their own graffiti.

One such instance was seen by a large number of members of the community and received spontaneous applause in the street. There have been no further reports of gang activity on social network sites or graffiti on the streets. Group sizes have also reduced and we no longer witness the large groups roaming the streets.

The Royal Estate alleyway improvements have stopped ASB and nuisance motorcycles at rear of all properties. There have been no further attacks against community buildings, schools and the Police station.

Partners report a softening of attitude towards the Police. Two ringleaders have been prosecuted. One has left the area the other has received her third ASBO and is currently adhering to conditions. Working with CPS to target such ringleaders was very effective. An example of the ASBO order can be found in Appendix J. Trigger mechanisms have been set with our partner agencies to watch for recurrence or escalation. The Operation Alamein template has been adapted for other areas in Doncaster and South Yorkshire.

The International City Church Doncaster awarded Edlington SNT and partners an award for proactive work in the community particularly with young people.

The local secondary school praised the drug proofing course for parents and continued to support the self help group that formed as a result.
The chair of Edlington Neighbourhood Watch, Mrs Maureen Tennison JP & Community Crime Fighter stated in an interview:

“It has been a really terrible year for our community with the incident at the Edlington Brickponds and the associated international media interest. Operation Alamein has been extremely successful although not connected with that incident. The close working relationship between the community, the Council, the Police and other partners has been the significant factor in the success. We don’t have the degree of anti-social behaviour that we did. Our members are really pleased with this initiative. We don’t have large gangs on the streets anymore but I don’t think this is accidental. If Operation Alamein had not taken place then things would have been unbearable. We thank the team for their vital work”

We gave certificates of achievement to many partners and the schools that supported and advised the process. Rewarding and acknowledging good behaviour was considered important.

A comprehensive Operation Alamein report was produced and sent to all partner agencies, other districts, forces and the Home Office as part of information sharing process. Operation Alamein has won a prestigious Leaders in Action Partnership Award in 2010 as an example of best practice in South Yorkshire.

Please see appendix K for a picture of the team.

Recommendations

All partners and stakeholders were consulted and the following recommendations were noted:

- Community meetings should include representatives from youth groups to provide a ‘voice’ for young people and inclusion in decisions.
- Existing diversionary activities in the area require coordination and support.
- Encourage Third sector involvement to sustain diversionary activities.
- Trigger mechanisms should be closely monitored
- More research into the ‘driver’ factors behind ASB and local gang identity.
- Re-evaluation of nuisance motorcycle strategy for out of area displacement.
- Conduct a second youth survey to compare opinions after the initiative.

Conclusion

We took the view that Lambeth took in 2008 stating ‘enough is enough’ and mobilised our collective resources to address the issue at an early stage. There was no significant gang problem in Edlington & Warmsworth at the time and it might be that it was more of a nuisance youth group issue. Recent reports such as ‘dying to belong’ an in-depth review of street gangs in Britain state that the distinction between these terms is negligible and that embryonic gang culture could thrive if not addressed. The young person’s survey gave great insight into perceptions in the area and must be carefully considered. Coordinated efforts to address these issues were largely pre-emptive in terms of addressing gang issues but certainly significant in terms of reducing nuisance youth incidents in our area. We wish to thank the numerous partners and stakeholders for outstanding support and vital contribution to Operation Alamein as it concludes in 2010.
Bibliography

Birmingham Bringing Hope: dealing with guns, drugs, knives and gangs in Birmingham, Feb 2008

Smith Ian, Duncan “Dying to belong” February 2009

Doncaster Star (June 2009)

Word Count: 3, 577
Appendix

Appendix A

Edlington in relation to Doncaster

Appendix B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drivers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Pressure from equals</td>
<td>Youth Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bad Influence from Key persons</td>
<td>FACT and community meetings</td>
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<td>Boredom</td>
<td>Youth Survey</td>
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<td>Lack of ambition and poor aspiration</td>
<td>NEETs de-personalised data</td>
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<td>Acceptance within a group</td>
<td>Networking sites</td>
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<td>Group Identity</td>
<td>Graffiti Tags “Wanny bong squad” “Edlo bad boys”</td>
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<td>Stereotyping by Community Groups</td>
<td>Local Media</td>
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<td>Poor Parenting and broken families</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Action Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hatred of Authority</td>
<td>Graffiti/ Criminal damage</td>
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<td>Perception that they can get away with it</td>
<td>Youth Survey</td>
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<td>Kudos and “bad boy” reputation</td>
<td>BEBO/FACEBOOK</td>
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Appendix C

Youth & Gang Related ASB In Edlington
9th June 2008 - 8th July 2009
### Appendix D

#### Nuisance Youths April – December 2008

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<td>Total</td>
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#### Nuisance Motorcycles April – December 2008

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### Appendix E

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<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reasons for criminality</td>
<td>Boredom, Impress Others, Coercion,</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much of a gang problem</td>
<td>65% Fairly big problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>What could be done to make you feel safer</td>
<td>71% more CCTV, 65% more Police</td>
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<td>'A criminal street gang or youth gang is defined as an ongoing group that has three or more members who engage in criminal activity. Members share an identity, maybe a name, a sign or a symbol.'</td>
<td>71% said this was a good definition of a gang.</td>
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<td>How worried are you about crime in general</td>
<td>46% said they were</td>
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<td>How worried are you about gang activity</td>
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<td>How worried are you about knives</td>
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<td>How worried are you about street drinking</td>
<td>53% said they were</td>
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<td>How worried about damage to property</td>
<td>62% said they were</td>
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<td>How worried about physical attack</td>
<td>63% said they were</td>
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<td>Examples of concerning behaviour</td>
<td>Groups causing damage to shops, Groups being abusive to shop customers, Drunken behaviour in the street, Nuisance motorcycling, Graffiti and damage</td>
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### Appendix F

**Neighbourhood news**

Positive action on motorcycle nuisance in Old Edlington

We asked

What are the issues in your street?

How can we make your life better?

You said

Motorcycle nuisance was a concern

We did

We have seized 12 bikes in your neighbourhood, dealt with offenders and established a motorcycle scheme to educate young people. We are working to help make your area a better place to live and work.

To contact your team in Edlington

Call 01302 385176 Poly Simon Kirkham, p02304 Daniel Lindley

Or visit: neighbourhood.southyorks.police.uk

**OPERATION ALAMEIN**

Edlington & Warmsworth 2009/2010

The majority of young people in the area are great. Most will never get in trouble with the Police. There are numerous activities in the area and we are listening to the opinions of young people.

We estimate that it may be as few as 30 or 40 young adults or young people that may cause 80% of the anti-social behaviour and nuisance in the village. We want to work with and support young people but will crack down on those that persist in causing nuisance. You can play your part!

Who is causing problems in the area?

Who is involved with drugs on the streets?

Who is causing damage or graffiti?

Who is riding motorcycles in a dangerous way?

Contact your local Safer Neighbourhood Team 01144320020

A number of agencies are working together to work with young people. Other agencies are also working together to deal with offenders. Our message is this.

"Have respect for yourself and the village where you live"
Appendix G

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>2009</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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Appendix I

Youth Nuisance reports 2008/2009

Appendix J

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDER ON:
Nicola Jeanette BINT

ON THE 11 MARCH 2018, DONCASTER MAGISTRATES COURT ISSUED Nicola Jeanette BINT WITH AN ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ORDER WHICH WILL BE IN FORCE UNTIL 10 MARCH 2021:

1. Use food or abusive words in a way that causes, or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person not in the same household as yourself.

2. Cause or encourage anyone else to behave in a way that causes, or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any of the following people anywhere within England and Wales: (a) Children (b) Elderly people (c) Disabled people (d) Vulnerable people.

If Nicola Jeanette BINT were to break any of the terms of the order, they could be sentenced to up to 5 years in custody, or a fine or to both.

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