

28/04/2008



# Home Office

Crime Reduction & Community Safety Group

## Tilley Awards 2008 Application form

Please ensure that you have read the guidance before completing this form. ***By making an application to the awards, entrants are agreeing to abide by the conditions laid out in the guidance.*** Please complete the following form in full, within the stated word limit and ensuring the file size is no more than 1MB. Failure to do so will result in your entry being rejected from the competition.

Completed application forms should be e-mailed to [tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tilleyawards08@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk).

All entries must be received by noon on **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008**. No entries will be accepted after this time/date. Any queries on the application process should be directed to Alex Blackwell on 0207 035 4811.

### Section A: Application basics

1. Title of the project: **Respect – It's up 2 U! Improving Student Behaviour on Home to School Transport**
2. Key issue that the project is addressing: **Reducing Crime and ASB on Home to School Transport**

**Author contact details**

3. Name of application author: Joan Tarrant/Rebecca Turner
4. Organisation submitting the application: Essex County Council
5. Full postal address:  
Essex County Council (D103)  
PO Box 11  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM1 1QH
6. Email address: [Rebecca.turner@essexcc.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.turner@essexcc.gov.uk)
7. Telephone number: 01245 435126

**Secondary project contact details**

8. Name of secondary contact involved in the project: Joan Tarrant
9. Secondary contact email address: [joan.tarrant@essexcc.gov.uk](mailto:joan.tarrant@essexcc.gov.uk)
10. Secondary contact telephone number: 01245 437624

**Endorsing representative contact details**

11. Name of endorsing senior representative from lead organisation:  
Richard Puleston  
Assistant Chief Executive  
Essex County Council
12. Endorsing representative's email address:  
[Richard.puleston@essexcc.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.puleston@essexcc.gov.uk)
13. For all entries from England & Wales please state which Government Office or Welsh Assembly Government your organisation is covered by e.g. GO East Midlands: **GO East**
14. **Please mark this box with an X to indicate that all organisations involved in the project have been notified of this entry** (this is to prevent duplicate entries of the same project):



**Section B: Summary of application** - *In no more than 400 words use this space to provide a summary of your project under the stated headings (see guidance for more information).*

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Like many other authorities Essex County Council experience varying degrees of anti-social behaviour on school transport. In the past generally these incidents were dealt with in a reactionary way.

Essex considered an innovative way of improving education about behaviour on school transport, and to work more effectively with partners to establish preventative measures in a scheme called 'RESPECT – it's up 2U'.

Before the introduction of the scheme there was:

- No definitive incident reporting system
- Poor communication between bus operators, schools and Essex County Council
- Unacceptable behaviour remained unchecked, leading to a decline in morale of bus drivers
- Unwillingness of operators to undertake school work, leading to higher tender prices

Through the introduction of a series of interventions the above issues were addressed. By working with stakeholders we were able to pool experience to develop a package of interventions to improve student behaviour.

The following initiatives were introduced:

- Interactive theatre workshops
- Interactive CD-Rom
- Better partnerships with schools
- Driver training
- Development of a dedicated team
- School Transport Code of Conduct
- CCTV on targeted routes

This project combined interactive education with a sense of social responsibility and increased awareness of the implications of anti-social behaviour. The objective was to create RESPECT for drivers, passengers and other road users by tackling bullying and acts of intimidation, stop dangerous behaviour, missile throwing and damage to the vehicles. This is a forward thinking scheme that has a longer term aim to provide students with the experience and confidence to use public transport appropriately as they move into adulthood.

Essex now has:

- Dedicated ECC Student Behaviour Officers
- Clear incident reporting procedures
- Improved Communication between schools, bus operators, Police and ECC
- Effective Partnership Working
- Students display more respect for bus drivers
- Bullying, Crime and Anti-social behaviour is reduced
- Improved behaviour

Schools have advised ECC they spend far less time investigating incidents, and CCTV data provides evidence necessary when contacting parents.

Bus operators feel supported and drivers are now aware that processes are in place to address bad behaviour. Routes have dedicated drivers and this encourages good relationships with students.

We have seen a decline with the number of incidents on transport. Routes previously notorious by the number of complaints and the distinct lack of interest by operators willing to bid for the work have now, all but, been erased.

**State number of words: 399**

**Section C: Description of project** – Describe the project in no more than 4,000 words. Please refer to the full guidance for more information on what the description should cover, in particular section 11.

## **RESPECT – It's up 2U! – Improving Student Behaviour on Home to School Transport**

### **Scanning**

Essex County Council has a statutory obligation to provide daily transport to school for over 23,000 students

Prior to 2004 ECC was finding it increasingly difficult to contract local bus operators who were willing to undertake school related transport work. Bus operators were reluctant to tender for this work due to students' anti-social behaviour and criminal damage to the vehicles. Those that were willing to undertake such work were submitting inflated tender prices to cover any future damage that may be incurred by their vehicles.

As a result of inflated tender prices ECC undertook a scanning exercise to identify the extent of the problem. Interviews with bus operators and teachers were held to gather more information about the problem. It was identified that bus operators were not retaining records or reporting incidents to Police because due to significant insurance excess costs, they were simply absorbing the damage costs into their overheads rather than claiming insurance. Furthermore, ECC is not responsible for repairing vehicles where damage is incurred so bus operators felt there was no reason to report the damage.

In addition, schools at this time were reluctant to report poor student behaviour to ECC due to concern over what the implications might be if their school developed had a poor image because of issues with this type of behaviour.

The scanning exercise confirmed that there was:

- No definitive reporting system for incidents of ASB between bus operators/schools/County Council/Police and students
- Poor communication between bus operators, schools and ECC
- Unacceptable student behaviour remained unchecked, leading to a decline in morale of bus drivers
- Belief amongst bus operators that if incidents were raised with Police/County Council no acceptable interventions/response would be taken
- An unwillingness of bus operators to undertake school work, leading to higher tender prices being submitted by those willing bus operators.

In 2004, project objectives were identified to establish a new way of supporting students, schools and bus operators including:

- Make Essex a better place to live and work and helping residents feel safer;
- Improve communications and develop closer partnership working between ECC, schools, bus operators and Police (stakeholders)
- Increase student respect for bus drivers, their peers, other road users and other figures in positions of authority;
- Tackle vandalism and graffiti to school buses;
- Tackle bullying and intimidation;
- Stop dangerous behaviour – throwing missiles, tampering with emergency doors, smoking, and distracting drivers;
- Encourage better behaviour right through from waiting for the bus to arriving at school; and
- Provide students with the experience and confidence to make best use of public transport through into adulthood.

### **Analysis**

For the reasons identified in paragraphs 3 and 4 above it was recognised early on that it was going to be virtually impossible to obtain a reliable statistical baseline.

Therefore, photographic evidence such as those examples presented below and anecdotal evidence from bus operators was and continues to be instrumental for ECC to identify where early intervention is required to prevent escalation.

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Images such as those below depict the type of student behaviour/ASB that the RESPECT project aims to prevent and reduce. This evidence was considered the most reliable and key to the early development and implementation of the RESPECT project. There were serious concerns that such behaviour exposed students to serious harm and the bus operators to additional costs adding to the overall cost to ECC to ensure that students are taken to school. All the images below were taken on Essex school buses courtesy of local bus operators and ECC staff.



**Picture 1.** Example of Bus Vandalism – Scratched windows, replacement cost of up to £500 each.

Detailed discussions with bus operators and drivers revealed:

- Poorer behaviour was occurring on the longer journeys
- Long journeys led to increased probability that young people would get bored and then misbehave
- A clear lack of supervision on buses
- Drivers were ill equipped with knowledge and skills to deal with problem behaviour
- Drivers felt undervalued and unsupported, resulting in incidents not being recorded and/or being managed inconsistently across the county.

Discussions with Head teachers identified:

- There was distinct lack of ownership of the problem, as the students had left school property
- There were receiving complaints from parents about incidents occurring on school buses to their children but schools felt powerless to deal with the issues due to lack of evidence
- Few of these complaints were registered with ECC or Police

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**Picture 2.** Example of onboard litter and graffiti. From 2006 CCTV images would be instrumental to identifying the students responsible for this type of behaviour



**Picture 3.** Example of Bus Vandalism

Crimes on School Buses

Very few incidents occurring on school buses are considered crimes. However, the proportion of how many recorded crimes occur on school bus transport as a proportion of all public bus transport is important. Figure 1 suggests that Essex does not have a significant issue with crime occurring on school bus transport compared to all crime occurring on public buses.

Figure 1 highlights that there has been a small decline in recorded crime on school buses. It should be noted that CCTV on school buses was first trialled in 2004 in Essex and more widely used from 2005/2006 which may have contributed to the decline.

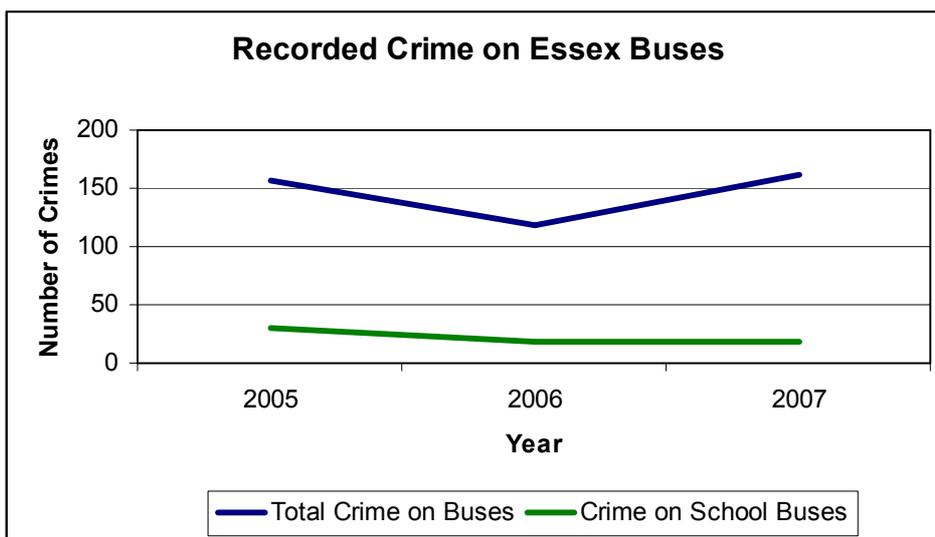


Figure 1.

Police Recorded ASB Incidents in Essex

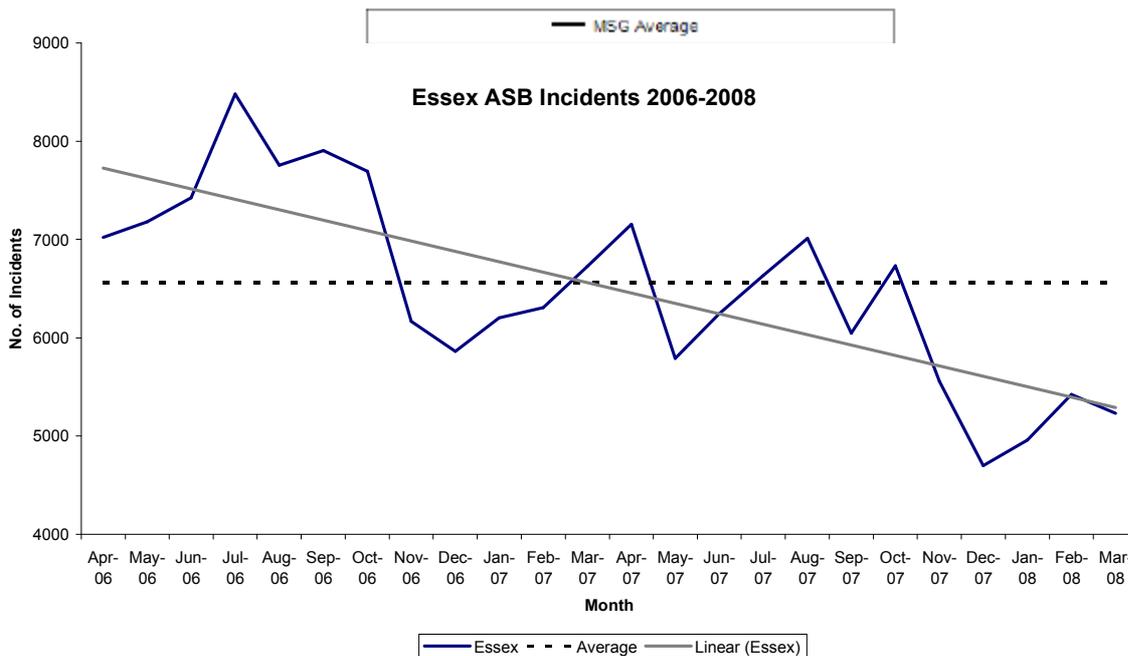
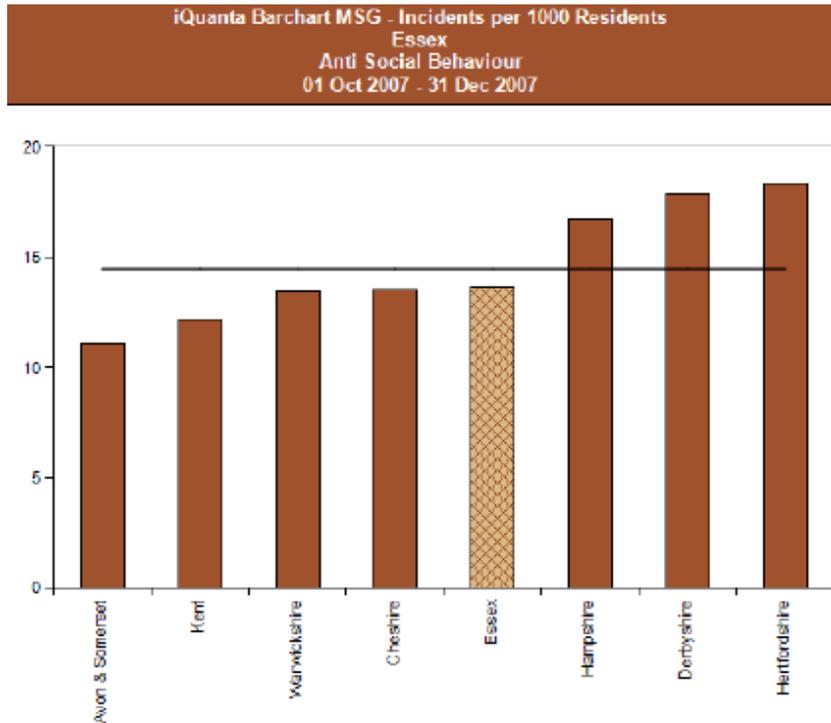
Essex as a county is no worse than its peers when it comes to the number of ASB incidents recorded by Police. In Essex the total number of ASB incidents that were recorded by Police in 2006/07 was 84,724. In 2007/08 there were 71,482, achieving an overall reduction of 13,242 incidents or 15.6%. It is not possible to compare figures

prior to 2005/06 due to Home Office Counting Rules amendments. Local Authority ASB data is not available at this time for the whole county.

For background information, Figure 2 below provides a partial view of how Essex is placed within its Most Similar Family Group for all ASB incidents. For the quarter ending Dec 07 Essex is in 4<sup>th</sup> place for the highest number of ASB incidents with Hertfordshire experiencing the highest number and Avon and Somerset the lowest. This provides valuable context to establish that Essex generally does not have any greater problem with ASB when compared with its MSF group.

Figure 3 shows that ASB incidents have been reducing since 2006.

**Figure 2. iQuanta Essex Comparison against Most Similar Family Oct-Dec 2007**



**Figure 3. (Source Essex Police)****Response:**

In 2004, work commenced to identify pro-active ways to improve student behaviour. It was recognised that a single intervention was unlikely to be effective on its own due to the diversity of Essex and the different types of behaviour.

Research was carried out on what the most effective learning and development methods for young people. Neighbouring counties including Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, Hertfordshire, and Bedfordshire were contacted to find out how they were dealing ASB and vandalism on school buses. However, no existing solutions were available at that time, so it was clear that a new approach had to be developed.

Three priority areas for development were identified:

- 1. Work more effectively with partners;**
- 2. improve driver training and student education on what is appropriate behaviour on home to school transport; and**
- 3. introduce pro-active preventative and enforcement measures to manage offenders, victims and the environment more appropriately.**

**1. Effective Partnership Working**

A working partnership of key stakeholders was established and a program of measures was identified that could be rolled out across the county, supporting a number cross organisational priorities. It was recognised that for the project to be effective 100% commitment from partners needed to be obtained so:

- Bus drivers – can report incidents to the bus operators
- Operators – can inform ECC and Police of incidents and have access to CCTV evidence
- School staff – can discipline students where appropriate
- Students – can choose how they behave and feel less fearful that they may be bullied
- Parents – can be supportive of schools and their children
- Police – can enforce, apprehend and interact/support students in a positive manner
- Essex County Council – can provide safe and effective transport to students and schools

ECC resources were reallocated to fund a Student Behaviour/ASB Officer post whose responsibilities are dedicated to investigating and improving all reported incidents from members of the public, schools, bus operators and parents/students. It was revealed early on by those officers that there was no single solution or a standardised approach for dealing with bus related incidents. For example one school would exclude a student for poor behaviour and others would request that ECC send a letter of warning to parents/students for the same type of incident.

A strategy to address issues was developed by the partnership with the top priority being to identify the most problematic routes in the county. Due to the large numbers of double-deck vehicles carrying students over long distances Brentwood and Maldon districts were prioritised.

A partnership strategic action plan was developed for initial implementation in the most problematic areas.

**2. Training and Education**

This priority area aimed to significantly improve driver training and educate students on how to behave on public transport. The interventions identified for final implementation included:

- **Driver Training**

Bus drivers face a number of challenges each day and require significant support from partners to help them address difficult situations. Appropriate training material was developed for bus drivers to ensure they were each equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage students effectively. An Incident Reporting Form was also introduced for completion by all bus operators. All relevant bus and ECC personnel have also undergone CRB vetting.

- **Interactive theatre workshops**

To raising awareness amongst students of appropriate public transport behaviour

**“Getting on”**

This is an interactive theatre piece aimed at Year 6 children who are about to embark on school transport for the first time. Performed by a professional theatre company, students experience an entertaining, engaging, and educational drama. Students are encouraged to interact with the performers throughout. The actors improvise and tailor the play to address any issues raised by students.

**“Onward Journey”**

This play is aimed at older students and encourages students to travel appropriately on school transport, tackling all aspects of the journey, from waiting at the stop, using public transport in years to come and addressing perceptions of how others may perceive young peoples’ behaviour.

An anecdotal situation used in the play involves a student losing their life as a result of “mucking about” at the bus stop. The students must consider how they would feel if they were witness to or were the victim of this type of situation. The play also considers the situation from a bus driver’s point of view.

- **Crucial Crew Interactive CD-Rom**

A CD-Rom game “*Up2U School Bus Run*” was developed which allows Year 6 students to observe the impacts and consequences that different decisions have in relation to a travel scenario. This game is used and distributed at Essex Crucial Crew road shows.

- **Establishment of Dedicated Transport Behavioural Officers**

ECC Passenger Transport has two specialist transport behavioural officers dedicated to the implementation and maintenance of the RESPECT project. The officers are responsible for delivering bus driver training and monitoring the incidents of anti social behaviour as they arise on home to school transport.

- **Student Code of Conduct**

Getting “buy in” from students and parents to sign up to a school transport Code of Conduct has shown good results regarding increased awareness of the RESPECT It’s up 2U project and how seriously ECC considers anti-social behaviour and describes the consequences of such behaviour.

### **3. Prevention and Enforcement**

#### **CCTV Pilot**

In 2005 CCTV was first installed on school buses at an Essex secondary school. Transport to the school is provided via a large number of double deck vehicles by one bus operator. Funded by the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership the pilot enabled individuals responsible for incidents of criminal damage, bullying and other ASB to be identified. Improved digital technology offers clear visual and audio evidence. Parents were advised in advance that CCTV cameras may be in use on some of the school buses that their children travel on.

The pilot aimed to achieve the following outcomes:

- provide comprehensive photographic intelligence for Police and for schools where parental support is required to manage student behavioural issues;
- assist drivers to feel more confident to report incidents to ECC, Police and schools;
- reassure parents particularly those with younger children that their children are being kept as safe as possible; and
- significantly improve student behaviour on buses.

As a result of the pilot clear behavioural improvements were seen amongst students. Bus operators reported that they felt more assured that incidents would be dealt with appropriately and drivers felt more supported by ECC, schools and their employers.

#### **Project Roll Out**

The success of the pilot led to the redirection of ECC funds and proposals to obtain funding from CDRPs being developed to fit further buses with CCTV across the county over the course of 2006/07. High priority schools were targeted as funding was obtained (including Brentwood County High School, King Edmund School - Rochford, Shenfield High School, St Peter’s School - Burnham, The Plume - Maldon, Helena Romanes - Great Dunmow,

Thomas Lord Audley – Colchester).

A significant but unplanned benefit of the project that was identified early on in the project surrounded the use of buses outside of the necessary home to school transport hours. Those buses that were fitted with CCTV would often be used as both school and public transport, therefore the CCTV would be used throughout the course of the day and the footage used following any incident maximising the benefits of CCTV.

Bus drivers were fully trained to operate the CCTV technology effectively and the procedures for reporting incidents were introduced to bus operators. Information was provided to all drivers and operators on the actions that ECC and schools will take following any incidents. CCTV footage is viewed by the school's nominated person (often the Safer Schools Partnership Police Officer) and any data collated for evidence. Any acts of wilful damage or particularly serious behaviour is reported and viewed by Police. Collectively, across the relevant partners, an agreement as to what action must be taken is reached.

Through the introduction of CCTV and closer partnership a staged approach introducing a number of actions was developed:

**Stage 1:** Following any incident a stage one warning letter is sent to parent/guardian— bringing the child's behaviour to the attention of the parents. The majority of parents receive this positively and offer supporting action i.e. removal of certain privileges (Refer to evidence in Annex 1).

**Stage 2:** Temporary Ban – The length of time that the ban is in place depends upon the scale of the incident but is generally for two weeks. The student's bus pass is confiscated temporarily (Drivers will not allow anyone to travel if they are unable to produce a valid bus pass).

**Stage 3:** Final Warning letters are sent to parents where any student is persistently misbehaving and are advised that as a final stage an Acceptable Behavioural Contract (ABC or 'Behavioural Agreement') may be imposed if the situation does not improve.

For incidents where there are very severe breaches of health and safety, a student may be banned instantly from using the vehicle for a period of time and their bus pass removed and held by the school. Such students will not be allowed to travel on the vehicle until they and their parents/guardians have signed an ABC of which one of the requirements is that they demonstrate their understanding and agree to adhere to the School transport Code of Conduct in the future. They must acknowledge that failure to comply with the ABC will result in the loss of their seat on the vehicle permanently ('Behavioural Agreement Ban' or ASBO). The use of ABCs in this context joins the RESPECT project up with the broader ASB agenda. At this stage, ECC informs both the local Police and ASB Coordinator who in turn deliver the ABC in person to the student and their parents. The coordinator/officer will explain the requirements of the ABC, the banning process and obtain the required signatures for the Agreement. By ensuring that the young person is brought to the attention of local ASB Coordinators at this stage a more comprehensive behavioural support system can be introduced.

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**Picture 3.** An example of a severe breach of health and safety as captured by on-board CCTV – student standing on seat and holding potential weapon. As a result of access to CCTV imagery offending students are managed appropriately according to the seriousness of the behaviour.



**Picture 4.** Example of attempted CCTV Vandalism - students are well aware that cameras are operating

**Figure 2**

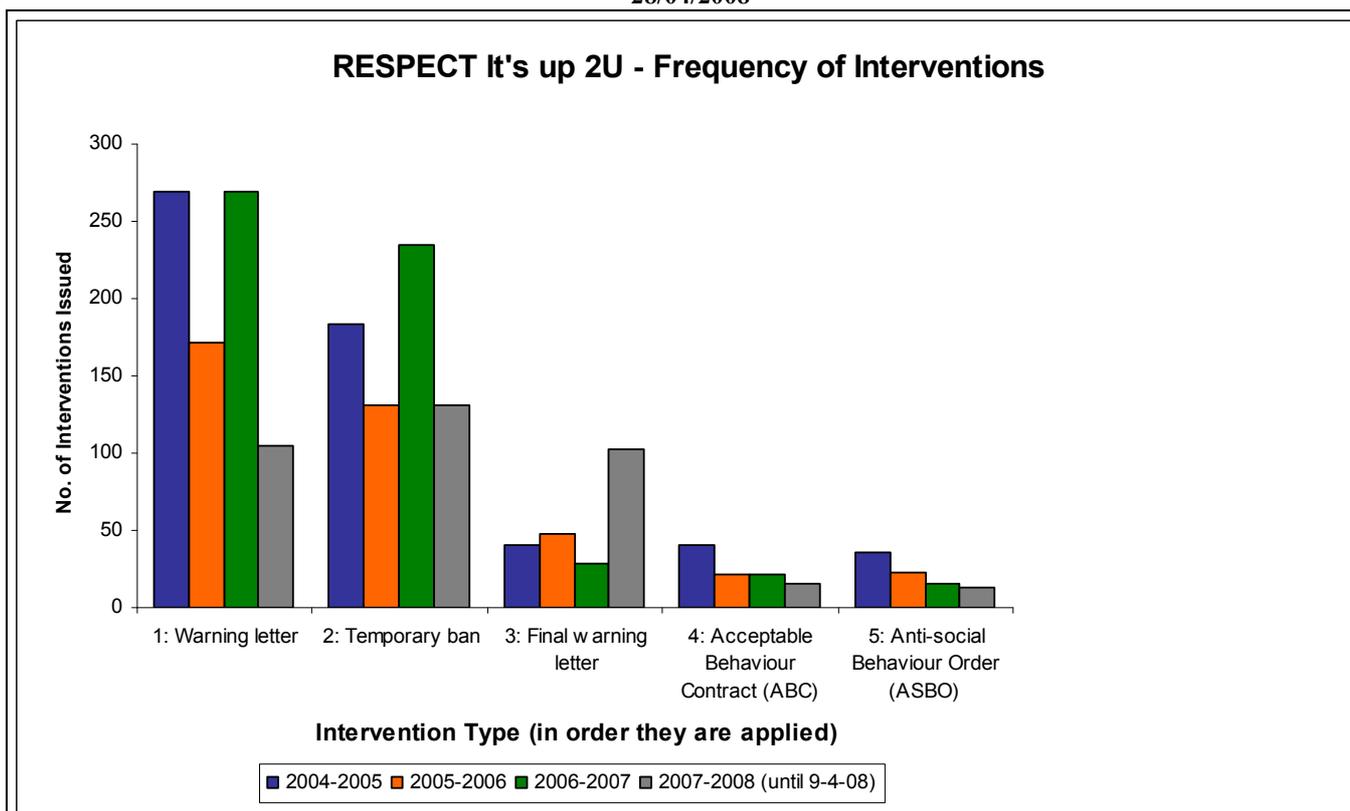


Figure 2 shows the frequency that the above actions have been used from 2004 to date. 2004/05 shows a peak where reporting procedures begin to be applied by all stakeholders. In 2005/06 a decline can be seen in the need to issue warnings and impose temporary bans as students became increasingly aware of the consequences to their actions. 2006/07 we see another peak for use of letters and bans as CCTV was implemented on the most problematic bus routes. The use of the most serious sanctions, ABCs and ASBOs has shown a steady decline over the 4 years as overall student behaviour improves.

The most recent development in the project has required very close partnership working with Essex Police. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and Safer Schools Officers have begun to travel on certain school bus routes periodically, interacting positively with students and where appropriate gathering intelligence. Early feedback received from PCSOs is that this addition to current procedures is very positive and local District Commander's are keen to see this element of the project continue.

In addition, Police have obtained ECC and school agreement to allow traffic Police to randomly stop school buses when they are travelling down major trunk roads to check on student behaviour. These buses are targeted due to the long distances travelled with students on board.

### **Assessment:**

By working together Essex has established a consistent approach to dealing with poor student behaviour on home to school transport across the county. RESPECT its Up 2U! introduced a 3-strand approach to tackling crime and ASB on home to school transport including:

- 1) **Education and Training**
- 2) **Prevention and Enforcement**
- 3) **Improved Partnership Working**

Each strand was assessed and evidenced by:

Priority	Evidence of Achievement
<u>Improve Student Education and</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All bus drivers and relevant ECC staff who are involved in managing student behaviour are Police vetted</li> </ul>

Driver Training

- Over 200 bus drivers have received comprehensive driver training improving skills and knowledge on how to manage poor student behaviour and behavioural management procedures.
- Clear incident reporting procedures for bus operators are now in place and awareness amongst partners of these procedures is improved. An Incident Reporting Form is widely used by bus operators to report incidents to ECC's new centralised incident reporting system
- Use of Interactive Theatre – 'Getting On' – in the past 3 years approximately 2,400 students have participated in the productions from 24 schools. 'Onward Journey' has been delivered to 6 schools and approximately 600 students. Anecdotal reaction to the productions has been extremely positive and regular requests are received for further productions and educational material. (see *annex 1 for detail of feedback*)
- Educational CD-ROM – distributed to 2,400 Year 6 pupils through Crucial Crew road shows.
- 2 student transport behavioural officers – increased ECC expertise and awareness of how the interventions are being received across the county.
- Feedback received on the home to school transport Code of Conduct has been positive, improving the image and perception of school travel to parents and students
- The Interactive Theatre productions have been specifically choreographed and tailored for Essex schools making them bespoke and innovative

Prevent Crime and ASB on School buses and Deal appropriately with poor student behaviour (Enforcement)

- Increased willingness amongst bus operators to bid for school transport contracts
- The number of student/parent/bus driver complaints received relating to routes that were previously perceived to be notorious has reduced
- Dedicated bus operators and drivers operating in particular schools/routes fostering improved relations with students
- 7 schools have had buses fitted with CCTV. A further 8 schools will be added in 2008/09 for certain targeted bus routes
- Images from CCTV have helped reduce time taken to deal with incidents and effectively target the troublemakers. This has greatly reduced the stress on the victims and encouraged reporting
- Alignment/use of ABCs and ASBOs for students demonstrating dangerous behaviour on school buses, the number issued has declined alongside the number of serious incidents recorded
- partnership working improved with Essex Police - making better use of Safer Schools Partnership Officers and PCSOs to regularly ride targeted routes to encourage good behaviour and to positively interact with students along the way
- Table 2 below shows that despite a relatively large number of warning letters and temporary bans being issued for what is considered less serious behaviour, just under 13% of temporary bans go on to become ASBOs. 27% of warning letters are followed up by final warning letters.

Intervention	Total 2004-2008
1: Warning letter	815
2: Temporary ban	679
3: Final warning letter	219
4: ABC	98
5: ASBO (final ban)	88

- In the first 3 weeks of the spring term 2008 the number of students banned from using school transport has reduced by over 50% compared with the same period of 2007

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- Student warning letters are now being issued to parents and students more readily
- Officer time spent investigating incidents is reduced as CCTV data provides the necessary evidence when advising parents of particular incidents. Schools no longer have issues of proving that an incident.
- Students feel more confident to report issues and feel reassured incidents will be dealt with swiftly and appropriately.
- Bus operators welcome the ability to have access to CCTV evidence when reporting incidents to Police.

Improve  
Partnership  
Working and  
Communications

- CDRPs and ECC jointly funding CCTV cameras on buses
- Increased shared intelligence between schools, bus operators, ECC and Police
- National recognition with project recognised as an example of good practice in the May 2007 edition of Department of Education and Skills Guidance emphasised the importance of Head teachers taking more responsibility for what happens when their pupils use public transport. This is reinforced by the Education Act 2006 which empowers head teachers to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside of the school premises, including school buses.
- ECC invited to present with Essex Police at the 8<sup>th</sup> National School Transport Seminar in January 2008 as to how partnership working can be effective and demonstrate best practice.
- Increased local media attention including BBC News and Anglia TV news items focusing on the partnership support element involving both ECC and Essex Police (refer to picture 6 below)
- commendations received from Essex Chief Constable Roger Baker for ECC's dedication to partnership working. All uniformed officers may ride Essex buses free of charge any time and by encouraging PCSOs to ride school buses periodically on priority routes

ECC is proud of what the RESPECT project has achieved to date and will continue to roll it out across the county where there are particular needs. Due to the RESPECT project ECC is able to provide a safer more effective service to enable all young people to access the education they need.



Picture 6. March 2008, BBC News visits a Brentwood school to film PCSOs who are travelling on school buses for RESPECT It's up 2 U!

State number of words used: 3,962 (max 4,000)

**Annex 1.**

Student Feedback (click icon to open document)



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RESPECT IT's UP2U! !

School Governor Feedback



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**Section D: Endorsement by Senior Representative** - *Please insert letter from endorsing representative, this will not count towards your word or 1MB size limit restrictions.*

Click on link



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**28/04/2008**

To Alex Blackwell at Home Office, Effective Practice & Communication Team, 4th Floor, Fry Building  
(SE Quarter), 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DF