

Shelter Inclusion Project

An Interim Evaluation

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Shelter Inclusion Project

- Three year pilot project
- Established 2002 by Shelter and Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
- Testing new approach to addressing anti-social behaviour
- Principle behind Shelter Inclusion Project is that in many instances behaviour deemed anti-social is due to unmet support needs.

Referral Criteria

- The project works with families, couples and single people living in the private or social rented sector with a history of anti-social behaviour.
- Can work with up to 31 households at a time

Key Objectives of SIP

- To prevent households from being excluded by landlords
- To resettle households that have been excluded by landlords
- To prevent exclusion and provide a route back into the social housing sector

Funding

- Overall budget for the financial year 2003-2004 of £301,000. The funding sources were as follows:
- Supporting People Block grant provides over half of core funding
- Homelessness Directorate provides £50,000 for core costs
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund - £58,000 for Youth Worker and on costs
- Children's Fund - £21,000 to cover majority of salary costs of Children and Young Person's workers and a small amount for their resources
- Shelter - £6,000 towards Hardship Fund.
- Funding structure 2004-2005 similar. Main difference is that the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund replaced funding from Homelessness Directorate

Staffing

- Project Manager
- Four support staff (two full time and two half time)
- Two Children and Young Person's workers (job share)
- Administrator (part-time) and an Office Assistant.

The Evaluation (April 2003 – September 2005)

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the project:

- Helps households address anti-social behaviour
- Assists households to maintain tenancies and avoid homelessness
- Resettles households that have experienced homelessness due to their anti-social behaviour
- Impacts positively on service users, agencies and the wider community.

Evaluation Method

- Literature review
- Service user monitoring (database of clients)
- User perspectives
- Agency perspectives (including community level workers e.g. youth workers, housing officers, community wardens)
- Tracking closed cases (and retrospective tracking)
- Evaluating cost effectiveness

Referral Sources

(as reported by service users and project staff)

- Most referred by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (ALMO)
- Housing Associations
- Social worker, school nurse, health visitors, drug and alcohol workers
- Self-referral

NB range of referral sources has widened but project would like to see referrals from police, probation, YOT and the private rented sector as well as more self-referrals.

Referral Procedure - Service User Views

- *The housing office said basically if I didn't take the help off Shelter then I could face losing the tenancy...it just put me off them totally. I didn't really want them to come round...I get on with my workers now, but when I first met them I didn't know what to think of them.*
- *The council said something about help with the children – it was either that or get evicted...I was a bit nervous at first...it was like all my children were naughty and out of control and I was a bad mother but then I realised that they were just trying to help.*
- *[I thought] if I'm doing this then they'll leave me alone...there was no apparent pressure but underneath the surface you did feel pressured but it was stated that it was purely voluntary (service user)*

Households

- Shelter Inclusion Project had worked with at least 47 households by the summer of 2004. These comprised 159 people, including 91 children.
- Key service users predominantly female, white and just over half were heading up a lone parent family

All households by type by gender of key service user (current and former cases)

Household type	Male	Female	All
Lone adult	4	5	9 (17%)
Adult couple	1	0	1 (2%)
Lone parent with one child	0	6	6 (13%)
Lone parent with two or more children	1	17	18 (39%)
Couple with one child	1	1	2 (4%)
Couple with two or more children	1	4	5 (11%)
Extended family	0	2	2 (4%)
Other arrangements	0	4	4 (9%)
All	7	39	47 (100%)

Source: Project monitoring. Percentages are rounded.

Referrals – project worker views

Thinking about it, from the assessments I've done lately, it is the lower end of ASB that we are dealing with. Sometimes it is a struggle to identify the anti-social behaviour.

Maybe it is the housing officers who think that there are people who are easier to engage with and have lower level problems so they are the ones who get referred. There are others who think 'I'm not going near him, we'll get him evicted'

Referrals - project worker views

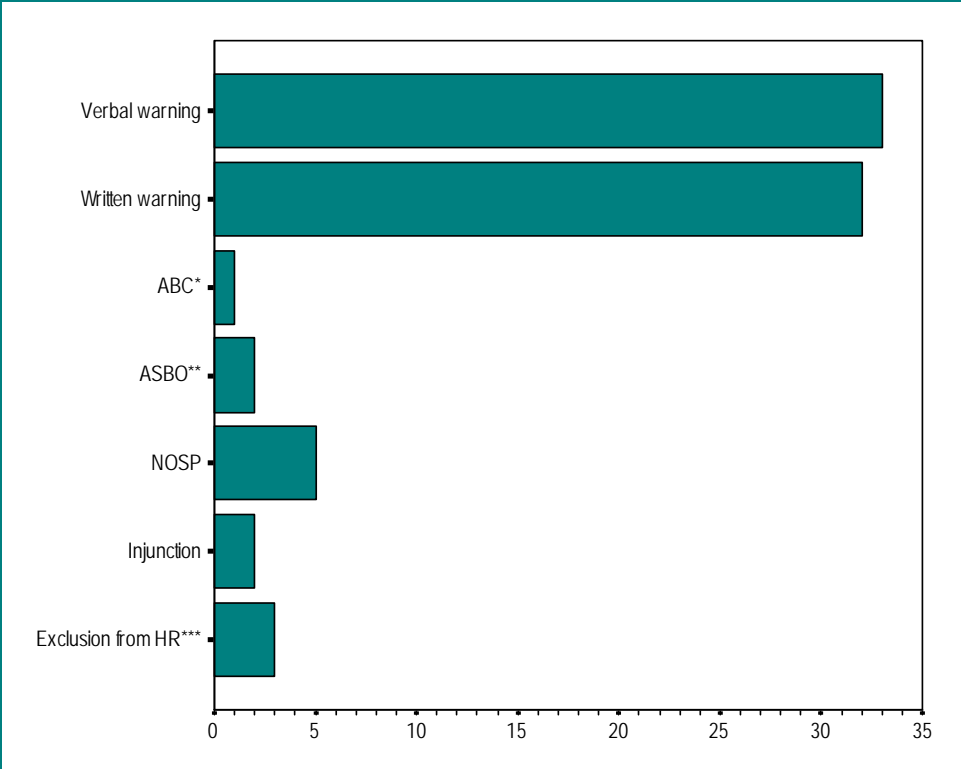
We get referrals from the same people all the time – there are those who really do want to help and those who believe in the old system of just moving people on – then it is nothing to do with them because they are off the estate.

There is still scepticism even among those agencies that are supposed to be our allies...some see us as soft – I don't think we are, we are trying to deal with real problems that people have and that is not being soft, it is really difficult for people.

Referrals – project worker views

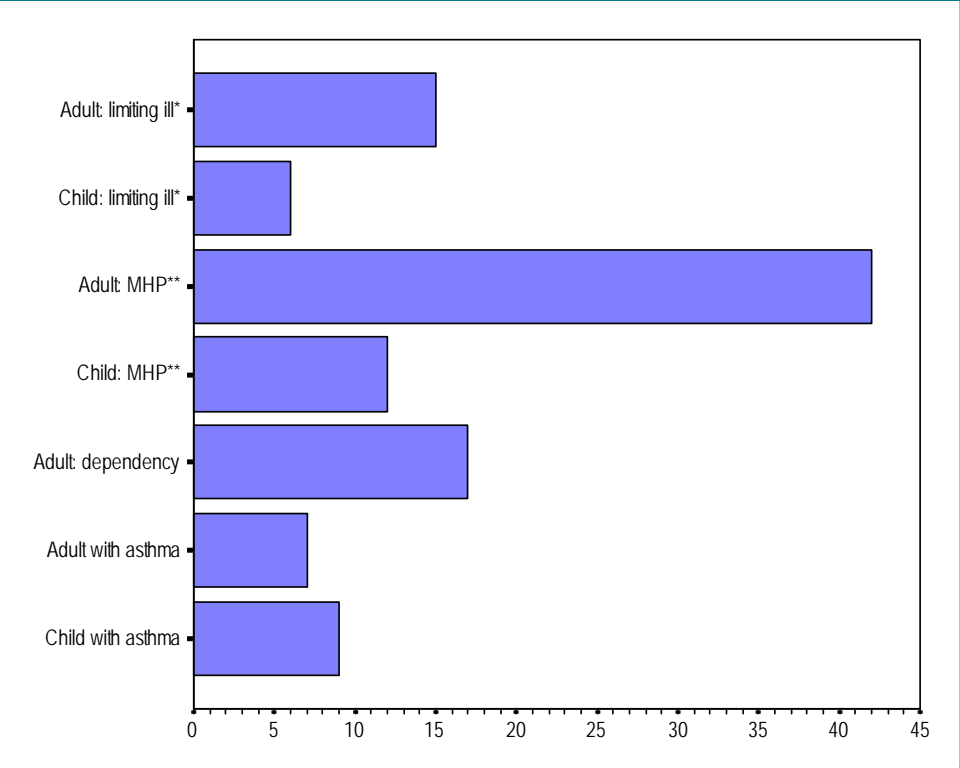
I've only had one really serious criminal case – there were mental health issues and firearms offences and an arson risk. He was excluded from the housing register – we managed to support him – we couldn't visit because of the risk so we worked with him in the probation office. So even though it was sort of arms length we were able to work with him...and he was rehoused...

Number of actions for anti-social behaviour being taken against the adults in the households at the point of assessment (current and former cases).



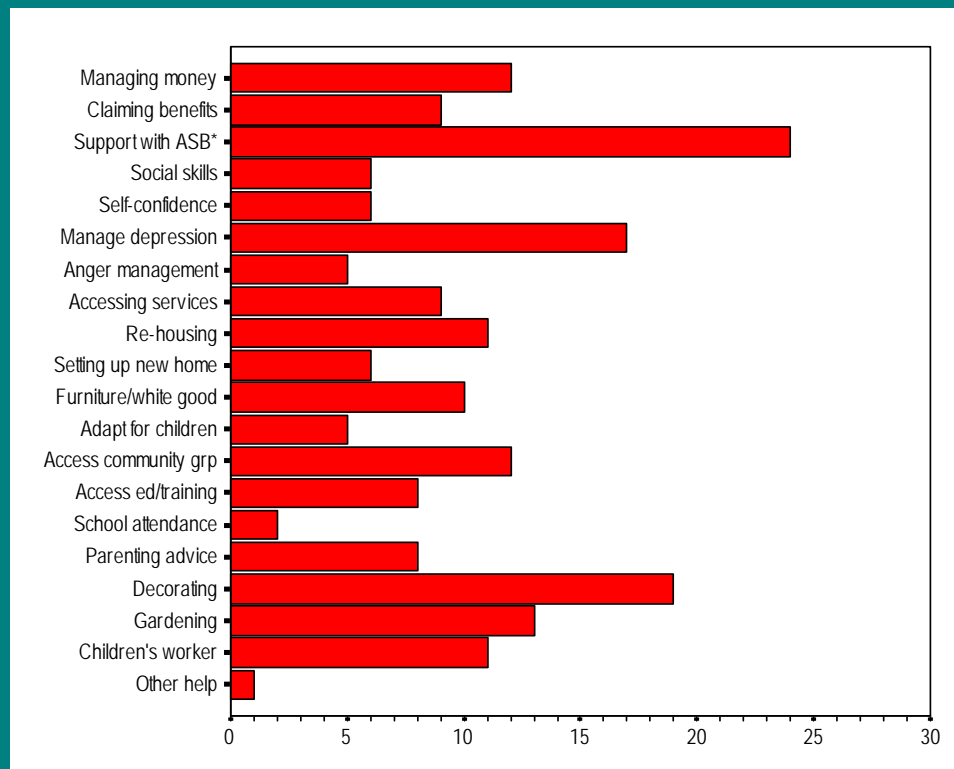
Source: Project monitoring. * Acceptable Behaviour Contract ** Anti-Social Behaviour Order *** Exclusion from Housing Register

Number of support needs reported at assessment (current and former cases).



Source: Project monitoring. * Limiting illness or disability ** Mental health or behavioural problems

Types of support required at assessment by number of households (current and former cases) Source: Project monitoring.



Support Provided

- Housing advocacy; Help with re-housing and setting up new home
- Helping with benefits and money (debts, budgeting)
- Support with addressing anti-social behaviour issues
- Practical assistance (such as decorating, gardening and repairs, providing goods)
- Limited financial assistance (e.g. providing decorating vouchers, school uniforms)
- Liasing and referring on to other agencies, including health, social services, YOTs, schools, lawyers, environmental health officers etc
- General emotional support
- Developing self-confidence, social skills and social activities
- Support with health issues, particularly depression
- Assistance with accessing education and training
- Parenting advice and support
- Addressing school attendance
- Addressing children's behavioural issues and increasing confidence through play and specially arranged activities
- Fun days for households

Support Provided

Project Staff Views

- *I think we are a floating support service...I think we have been more ready to reject people if they haven't got ASB issues and that the referrals are more about that but the work we are doing is more like general support... the work we are doing is general support with low level anti-social behaviour but it does seem to be working and even when you work with people supposedly with low level ASB once you go in and get to know them you discover that things are more serious...* (Project staff)
- *The work is not really very different from resettlement work – okay they are not homeless but the people are the same. There is work that is specific to ASB but that is more liaising with housing officers and being more involved with children workers. For the first six months it is often crisis work – like they have no windows so let's get that sorted...you can be six months down the line before you even start to address any behaviour issues and that happens in any normal support work...There is a lot of liaison, referral to other agencies, counselling services, advocacy and sort of mediation.* (Project staff)

Support Provided Project Staff Views

- *We'll provide or do anything where we can see some sustainable outcomes in terms of anti-social behaviour - for example the project will provide beds for children where they do not have one – outcomes are considerable in terms of self-esteem, behaviour, meeting curfews and emotional well-being. (Project staff)*
- *Again, as we said last time, if someone asked us what our strategy for dealing with ASB is we couldn't answer them – but what we do seems to work. We are doing what we set out to do – addressing the underlying problems that might cause ASB. (Project staff)*

Support Provided – Children and YP Worker

- *Part of my work has moved from providing diversionary activities to saying 'I am going to provide this activity because you've done fantastically this week and I know it has been difficult but you've done really well, you've managed to stay inside for all your lessons' so that is in part about tackling anti-social behaviour...and not just a blanket 'Let's go bowling'. (Project staff)*
- *Now a lot of those activities are not stand alone activities, they are part of a wider programme of support that is about encouraging that child's confidence and self-esteem, but ultimately to be addressing the anti-social behaviour. At the end of that we are getting parents to come out with their children and young people and actually showing them how to spend quality time with their children and how to do things that are affordable in their own area (Project staff)*

Support Provided – service user views

- *I had problems controlling the children...I couldn't and they controlled me but since working with Shelter things have improved, the swearing has stopped...now, instead of shouting at them I do things [worker] suggested like making them sit on the naughty step or stopping them from watching telly*
- *My ex smashed the doors and Shelter got me new doors fitted...they hired garden tools for me and they got me a grant and they got me new beds and bedding and furniture...my ex smashed everything...We are going to Gulliver's World and [worker] is getting me vouchers for Noah's Ark and she is going to get colouring pencils and paper and that for [daughter] she has helped with my bills, she has made it so that I can afford to pay everything now...*

Support Provided – service user views

- *They [Shelter] got in touch with a solicitor and they wrote to the council about all the complaints and explaining what we were going through and they actually put a hold on the eviction but they said if there were any more complaints then they would...as far as I know there haven't been any more complaints about the children...(Service user)*
- *By the time I started seeing Shelter that [threat of eviction] had been sorted out...the court was told that I was going in for Shelter to visit me and they stopped proceedings... (Service user)*

Impact of Shelter Inclusion Project – service user views

I think if they hadn't been around I think they might have evicted me. I do, yes definitely...I think they would have done.

They made me more confident....I could hold my head up –I didn't do anything wrong. They helped me manage things myself instead of turning to the bottle...so that I'd be off my head and shouting at the kids when they hadn't done anything...They did help me in that way. I am not a baby anymore – I'm a mother...so they did help me, they made me open my eyes....both of them – Shelter and the council. Especially [support worker] because she explained everything – if it hadn't been for Shelter and the council I could have been suicidal or in prison...I could have been dead or in prison and my kids in care because it was getting to that stage...

Project workers' overview of outcomes

17 closed cases – assessments available for 14 households

Half the households reported as having made good progress in tenancy sustainment

All but one of the other half described as making some progress

All but one household described as making good progress or some progress in money management

For the most part project staff described the progress of children as 'good' (15 out of 23) with all but one of the children described as making 'some' progress

Tenancy sustainment (project figures)

- A total of 14 households moved home during their time with the project, 12 of these were planned moves
- In all but one instance households were in much more stable living conditions when contact with project ended
- Households no longer subject to action by landlords for anti-social behaviour when support ended

Project workers' reports on households' progress in dealing with anti-social behaviour

