

What people told us about the law in Northern Ireland about anti-social behaviour

**Anti-social behaviour is when people do things
that may upset or cause problems for other people**



About this report



We are part of the government in Northern Ireland.



We wanted to look at the law in Northern Ireland about **anti-social behaviour**.

Anti-social behaviour is when people behave in a way that can upset or scare people in the local area.



For example, people may:

- Cause problems by drinking alcohol on the streets
- Make a lot of noise or fight in public
- Damage public buildings
- Leave lots of rubbish on the streets



What we did

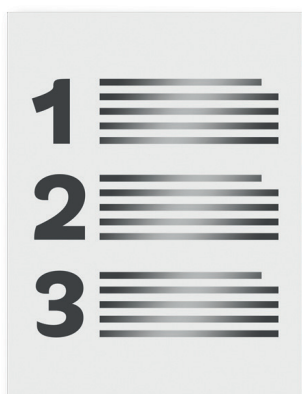


In 2018 we asked people in Northern Ireland what they thought of the law about anti-social behaviour.



We wanted to know:

- How the law in Northern Ireland is working at the moment
- What the law in Northern Ireland should be like



This report tells you the main things that people and organisations said.

The main things that people said



1. The law in Northern Ireland about anti-social behaviour

Most people said that the law at the moment does not work very well.

For example, people think that:



- The police and councils need more powers to stop anti-social behaviour
- It is too hard to deal with anti-social behaviour. It takes too long
- The way the law works can cause problems for young people
- The law should be easier to understand and use



2. A law about drinking alcohol in public



The law is called **Part 5 of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008**.

This helps the police to stop problems when people drink too much alcohol in public.



For example, the police can take alcohol away from people.

But only in places where the council says this is OK.



This part of the law has not started yet.

There are some problems with making the law happen.



Many people think it is a good idea to start using this part of the law.

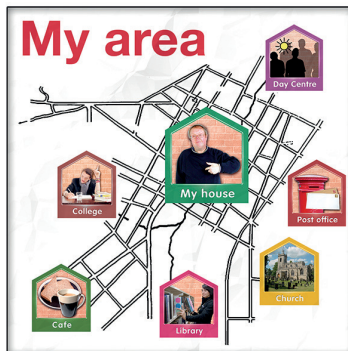
But there needs to be some changes to make it work better.

Some people do not think this law would help.



For example, people think that:

- Other ways might work better. Like support for people to solve their problems

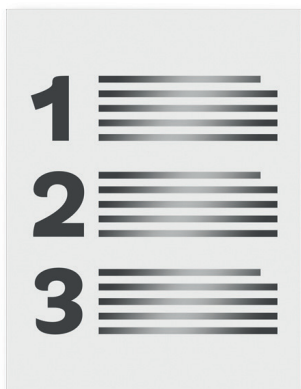


- People might just move to another area to drink alcohol



3. Some laws about anti-social behaviour in England, Wales and Scotland

We wanted to see if Northern Ireland should have these laws too.



1. Criminal Behaviour Orders

This is when courts in England and Wales can tell people what they must do to make their behaviour better.



For example, people may have to:

- Go on a course to learn how to be less angry
- Get help for drug or alcohol problems

People have different ideas about this law.



Some people think that:

- It is better than other ways that courts use at the moment
- It could help people solve problems that make them behave like that

Some people want more information.

For example, they are worried that:

- There are laws like this already in Northern Ireland
- The law would cause problems for young people under 18



2. A law about keeping public places safer

This is called Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)

Councils in England and Wales can use this law to stop anti-social behaviour in certain places.

For example, they can stop people drinking alcohol in a park.



The council cannot just use this law.

They have to ask local people first.



People have different ideas about this.

Some people think we should have this law in Northern Ireland.

But only if people use it in a fair way.



Some people are worried about this law or think it should not happen in Northern Ireland.



For example, people think that:

- It might make things worse for people who need more support, like young people and homeless people
- The problem would just move to another place
- The law might not be working well in England and Wales



3. A law about closing buildings where anti-social behaviour happens

This is called Closure Powers



Police and councils in England and Wales can close places for up to 2 days or 6 months.

Many people think it is a good idea to close places if there is a big problem.



But some people are worried about this law or think it should not happen in Northern Ireland.

For example, they think that people might be homeless if they have to leave a place.



Some people are not sure:

- If the law is about closing business places or people's homes
- What problems the law would help with
- How well the law has worked in England and Wales



Some people think this law is too much to deal with anti-social behaviour.



4. A law about stopping noise problems in Scotland

In Scotland the police can do more to stop noise problems.

For example, the police can:



- Ask people to stop making noise
- Take away anything that is causing noise if they need to.

Like musical instruments or things to play music with



Many people think this is a good idea.

Some people asked:

- If we already have laws like this in Northern Ireland
- If councils could use this law as well.



Or else it might be too much work for the police



Some people are worried about having a law like this in Northern Ireland or do not want it.

They want more information about how it would work.



For example, they think this law might:

- Stop people getting their rights
- Put the police in danger
- Be used in the wrong way

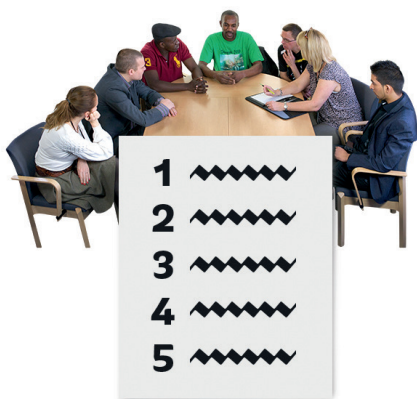
Other things that people said



- We need a better way to explain anti-social behaviour so everyone knows what it is
- Local groups should work together more to stop anti-social behaviour happening in the first place
- We should look at other things that the law says people can do in England and Wales.



What happens next



We are looking at some of the questions people had so we can:

- Get more information
- Decide what is best for any laws we might need in the future



We will not look to make any new laws at the moment.

We need to look at what we might need and how it might work first.



If we want to make new laws, we will ask people what they think first.

We will also:

- Look at how local groups can work better together to stop anti-social behaviour
- Work with councils to look at what they can already do about anti-social behaviour and how it could work better



