



Don't suffer in silence

NIGHTINGALE TASKFORCES

As spokespeople for victims of anti-social behaviour, we are contacted by practitioners and victims on a daily basis. We are consistently informed that anti-social behaviour redress is dependent on where you live and who takes your case. This is not acceptable.

We recognise many practitioners already work to models of best practice. However, the pandemic has brought the deficiencies in anti-social behaviour management into sharp focus. It is time we open a national conversation to promote positive and consistent change in the profession so that we can protect victims and keep our communities safe.

What is a Nightingale Taskforce?

A nightingale taskforce is a concept created by ASB Help. It has been proposed to the government to address:

1. The lack of consistency in the management of anti-social behaviour across England and Wales;
2. The systemic failures which have led to victims still being let down by agencies, despite the introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014;
3. The culture of how anti-social behaviour is viewed as 'low-level' crime rather than symptomatic or symbiotic of it;
4. The backlog of cases that arose in lockdown.

Why are we asking for Nightingale Taskforces?

As well as the inconsistency in anti-social behaviour management, one fundamental problem is the absence of data about anti-social behaviour. There is no requirement for some agencies

to record and report data about how many cases of anti-social behaviour have been reported and what interventions have been used to manage cases. We know from anecdotal testimony provided by practitioners that anti-social behaviour continues to rise and during lockdown, this was between 25-300%. By having Nightingale Taskforces, we have an opportunity to gather that data and analyse it to inform how we improve the profession.

Nightingale Taskforces offer us the opportunity to create a blueprint for the future. We can tackle entrenched cases that are plaguing communities and we can protect victims, affording them the rights that victims of crime already have.

What would a Nightingale Taskforce do?

1. It would operate at a county level and would not be a duplication of existing partnership problem solving groups;
2. Triage anti-social behaviour cases to prioritise those where there is a significant risk of mental or physical harm;
3. Identify and proactively manage areas identified as hotspots;
4. Utilise victim profiling methodology and a harm centred risk assessment approach;
5. Deploy the most appropriate interventions quickly and efficiently including the tools and powers of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014;
6. Manage cases where anti-social behaviour is secondary to the primary issue; the legislation can be used for domestic abuse, organised crime cases and even terrorism. If the behaviour is causing harassment, alarm, distress or nuisance and annoyance, the legislation can be used.
7. Most importantly: SECURE A RESOLUTION TO THE CASE, WHICH IS FAIR, REASONABLE AND PROPORTIONATE TO ALL PARTIES.

Who should be involved in the Nightingale Taskforces?

1. The local authority including anti-social behaviour and environmental protection specialists;
2. Police;
3. Housing Providers operating in the area;
4. Representatives of private landlords;
5. Mental health services;
6. Social services;
7. Clinical commissioning groups/NHS;
8. Fire/Ambulance services where relevant;
9. Legal experts;
10. Support providers in the area;
11. Most importantly: COMPETENT ASB PRACTITIONERS

Where areas are already working effectively, Nightingale Taskforces would provide the funding necessary to enhance services and address the lockdown backlogs. For those areas not managing anti-social behaviour effectively, Nightingale Taskforces provide a robust framework of operation with mechanisms for accountability.

Why are Nightingale Taskforces different to existing multi-agency partnerships?

Practitioners will recognise that sometimes, participation in a multi-agency meeting is a tick box exercise only. Nightingale Taskforces are premised on a framework for action operating at the county level. This means:

1. Every case is considered within pre-determined terms of reference which acknowledge victims, offenders, location and the type of anti-social behaviour that must be managed;
2. A lead agency, or lead agencies, are identified at the point of triage;
3. A strategy established, using problem solving principles, to manage the case to a successful outcome;
4. Support will be offered to victims and alleged offenders as standard;
5. Victims will be informed of their right to invoke the community trigger if the taskforce is unable to resolve their case;
6. The framework will incorporate a requirement by lead agencies to take enforcement action where deemed necessary; if they don't, another agency will take that action and be able to recover any costs;
7. Taskforces will be provided with standard information sharing agreements and memorandums of understanding so that agency participation is not delayed because of GDPR concerns.
8. Legal experts will be authorised to give approval to a recommended enforcement option at the taskforce meeting;
9. Taskforces can act as a conduit for identifying and commissioning services required for the local area quickly to manage new and evolving trends in anti-social behaviour.

What do we need to make this happen?

1. Funding from central government to establish Nightingale Taskforces;
2. Legislation to ensure agencies participate and comply;
3. Sanctions for agencies who refuse to complete actions the Taskforce has deemed necessary;
4. Redress for victims who continue to be failed by agencies.

If Nightingale Taskforces are established, they will not only be able to manage the backlog of anti-social behaviour cases, they will work proactively to manage new cases quickly and decisively. Imagine how much money this will save in the long term? We all know of cases that have been around for over 5 years. That is five years of resources used by agencies to respond to each incident in isolation rather than problem solve the case with stakeholders and formulate a solution. More importantly, we can protect victims and enable our communities to be safe places to live.

If you have feedback or would like to make suggestions about the Nightingale Taskforces concept then please email us at admin@asbhelp.co.uk