

ASBOs - More harm than good

This week Sorcha Boyle looks at the controversial issue of young people and ASBOs.

For anyone who doesn't know, ASBO is short for Anti-Social Behaviour Order. ASBOs were introduced in Northern Ireland in 2005, despite protests from children, young people's groups and a high court legal challenge.

Recently three young people appeared in my local Magistrate's Court, as Derry's first ASBO applications were heard.

According to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 ASBOs are issued for "behaviour which causes harassment, alarm or distress to one or more people who are not in the same household as the person the order is against."

Graffiti, abusive behavior and dealing drugs are some of the things that I would consider to be 'anti social behaviour', but you can be issued with an ASBO for something as ordinary as hanging around a street wearing a hoody!

Personally, I don't think this is fair; no one would think twice if it was a group of adults standing in the street - no matter what clothes they are wearing.

I recently read that a 12-year old boy, after being issued with an ASBO, was unable to attend school, since it's within the 'exclusion zone'. Surely he would be much more likely to get involved in 'anti-social behavior' having nothing to do all day, rather than being in school and getting an education.

Some young people regard their ASBO as a sort of, 'badge of honour,' that ups their, 'street cred,' and makes them look tough. In fact, in some areas it was reported that friends of ASBO holders were even feeling left out and trying their best to get an ASBO to be the same!

In my view, ASBOs couldn't be a good thing if they are actually motivating young people to behave badly, just to fit in.

ASBOs have been described as 'fast tracking' people as young as ten into the criminal justice system and many children's groups consider them a breach of children's human rights.

They point to the fact that newspapers can 'name and shame' those who get ASBOs when usually under 18's have the right to privacy under the law.

So what approach will work best in the long term? My feeling is these first cases could have big implications for our generation, but I think ASBOs will be making the headlines for some time to come.

About this team

This article was written by Sorcha Boyle and edited by David McCreynolds, 16. It was published on the [Reach for the Sky](#) website.

45 comments

wake up

Well said, Anna from London. Asbos are not helpful to anyone. ASB is a community problem, the community needs to talk to, involve, model respect for the adolescents. If the kids were respected and felt they were part of their communities, instead of aliens, there would be far less ASB. It's time we ALL took responsibility. The police should act by supporting and empowering residents to resolve issues themselves - this is the only way to reduce it.

andy from derby, 21 March 2011 02:45

Why

Why do people really get asbos there must be a reason ?

Lewis Jackson (age 16) from Tamworth, 09 February 2011 09:21

asbos are sikhead

why u gassin? asbos are sikhead bruv, there the nearest tings to qualifications i get blad, if i get one more i get a prize for covering all sections, robbery,vandalism, gbh. its sik now i can go work in kfc brup 2k10 croydons finest

richard vella (age 12) from croydon, 16 July 2010 09:44

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