

Victim Support Scotland Anti-Social Behaviour Project

*A collaborative approach to improving
responses to anti-social behaviour in private
rented sector*



Contact Details

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Working days/hours:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

9-4 pm

Session Overview:

Introductions: VSS & Project Coordinator

Introduce the new Anti-Social Behaviour Project

Recognising ASB & understanding its impact

Victim-centred responses to ASB

VSS Support & Referral Pathway

Training & Toolkit Overview

Q&A & exploring partnership working

Who we are

Victim Support Scotland (VSS) is an independent charity that provides free and confidential support and information to people impacted by any type of crime.

Mission

All those affected by crime receive the high-quality support and care they need to move forward with their lives.

Vision

People affected by crime – victims, witnesses and their families – are treated with dignity and respect and are at the heart of justice in Scotland.



VSS values guide the support we offer



Victims are at the heart of everything we do

We care



We work with intent

We are ambitious



We persevere

ASB Project Overview

Victim Support Scotland's new national antisocial behaviour (ASB) project will strengthen how Scotland's private rented sector **recognises, responds to, and supports** people affected by ASB.

Funded by the **Safe Deposits Scotland Charitable Trust**, the project aims to strengthen partnership working and promote a coordinated, victim-centred response to anti-social behaviour in Scotland.

How we can help people impacted by anti-social behaviour

- We offer free, confidential, and independent emotional support, practical guidance, and safety planning, tailored to needs.
- VSS's Emergency Assistance Fund is open to people in Scotland who have no other access to funds and are struggling financially as a direct result of crime (subject to a needs assessment).
- Where appropriate and chosen by those impacted, mediation can provide a safe, supported opportunity to resolve issues, rebuild confidence, and regain a sense of control.

How we can support landlords and letting agents:

- Access free training and resources to strengthen responses to anti-social behaviour.
- Help develop a greater understanding of anti-social behaviour and learn how to respond in a victim-centred and collaborative way.
- Take part in focus groups, share best practice, and work collaboratively to shape future development of anti-social behaviour services.

Recognising ASB

- **Neighbour dispute/conflict:** Usually involves **two-way disagreements** between neighbours, noise, parking etc. It may not be intentional or targeted. **Early intervention and mediation** can help prevent the situation from escalating.
- **Anti-social behaviour (ASB):** Behaviour that causes **harassment, alarm or distress**, often persistent or targeted. There is usually a **clear victim and perpetrator**. Examples include intimidation, persistent noise, vandalism or drug-related activity.
- **Criminal behaviour:** Actions that **break the law**, assault, criminal damage, harassment or drug offences. Criminal behaviour can happen alongside ASB or develop from a neighbour dispute.

ASB has a significant impact on a person's wellbeing, safety and quality of life.

- **Emotional:** Stress, anxiety, fear and feeling constantly on edge.
- **Mental wellbeing:** Low mood, loss of confidence and feeling helpless or isolated.
- **Physical health:** Sleep problems, exhaustion and other stress-related health issues.
- **Sense of safety:** Feeling unsafe in their own home or community.
- **Social impact:** Avoiding neighbours, friends, family or local places.
- **Financial impact:** Damage to property, needing to move home, not going to work or paying rent.
- **Daily life:** Difficulty working, studying, relaxing or enjoying their home.

Vulnerabilities & ASB

What is vulnerability? Being more exposed to the possibility of being harmed — physically or emotionally. **Vulnerability can increase both the risk and impact of ASB,** and many can experience multiple vulnerabilities at once.

Vulnerabilities may affect:

- How someone experiences ASB
- How they communicate with professionals/landlords
- Their ability to report incidents
- Their ability to gather evidence
- Whether they feel safe engaging with neighbours/police/landlords
- **A one-size-fits-all approach to ASB does not work.** Understanding vulnerability helps landlords respond proportionately and supportively.
- **Don't assume that someone who isn't reporting ASB isn't being affected by it.**

Responses to ASB

1. Early intervention & identifying signs of escalation.

Common warning signs:

- Increase in frequency or intensity of contact – e.g. repeated complaints, constant confrontation
- Use of intimidation – e.g. shouting, threatening language, staring
- Retaliatory behaviour – e.g. meeting noise nuisance with more noise nuisance
- Refusal to engage with informal resolution and/or mediation
- Early signs of harassment – e.g. repeated unwanted contact or monitoring, including using domestic CCTV to invade privacy

2. Language Matters

- People affected by ASB can feel **dismissed, minimised or unheard**, which can increase feelings of isolation and reduce trust in services.
- Even well-intentioned language can unintentionally minimise someone's experience and increase risk of them feeling blamed.
- Victim-centred language helps build trust, promotes collaboration and empowers people to engage with support.
- Choose language that **listens, validates and supports**. You may not be able to resolve the issue immediately, but you can make sure the person feels heard, taken seriously and supported.

2. Language Matters

Instead of saying....	Try saying...
"It's just a neighbour dispute."	"It sounds like this situation is having a significant impact on you. Let's talk through what's been happening."
"There's nothing we can do."	"Let's look at the options available and discuss what support we can offer."
"There's nothing we can do, you have no evidence."	"Evidence can be helpful, but it's not the only thing we consider. Let's talk about what information/evidence you have and how we can support you moving forward."
"They're probably not doing it on purpose."	"I understand the impact this behaviour is having on you, regardless of the intention behind it. Let's see what we can do."

3. Assess Needs & Impact

- Consider how the ASB might be affecting mental/physical health, feelings of safety, sleep and routines and employment and relationships.
- Look beyond the main parties — **who else may be affected?** Children, older residents and neighbouring households.
- Don't just respond to the latest incident, consider the bigger picture.

Consider this:

- Is the behaviour becoming more frequent?
- Are there opportunities for **early intervention or de-escalation?**
- Could other services or partners provide additional support?
- What could happen if nothing changes?

3. Assess Needs & Impact

- **Accountability & Compassion Can Coexist**
- Harmful behaviour ≠ a “bad person”
- People who cause harm may also be experiencing trauma, vulnerability or unmet needs.
- Recognising vulnerability does not excuse harmful behaviour.
Accountability remains important and does not diminish the experiences those impacted; rather, it helps us develop more collaborative, compassionate responses.
- Understanding the underlying causes can help identify opportunities for early intervention and help reduce repeat incidents.

4. ASB Case Management & Evidence.

- Good evidence can help build a clear picture of what is happening, the impact and any patterns of behaviour. Encourage those impacted to keep track of:
- **Keep an incident diary:** who, what, where, when + impact
- **Record patterns:** dates, frequency and reports to other agencies
- **Gather witness statements** where appropriate
- **Keep all evidence:** emails, letters, texts, voicemails and social media
- **Save digital evidence quickly** — content may be deleted
- **Consider noise monitoring** tools, (The Noise App)
- **CCTV can help**, but check legal requirements first

5. Work collaboratively - don't do it alone.

- **No single agency can tackle ASB alone.** Police, housing, local authorities, health services and community organisations each bring different expertise, powers and information.
- **Working together creates a fuller picture** and helps identify the needs, risks and underlying causes of ASB.
- **Share information appropriately** and coordinate support early to avoid escalation.
- **Take an upstream approach** by addressing underlying issues early, rather than only responding to individual incidents.
- **Collaborative working can lead to more effective, sustainable outcomes** for everyone.

How to refer to VSS:

Access our support by filling out a referral form on our website, messaging our webchat, or calling our helpline:

Referral form / Webchat: **victimsupport.scot**

Helpline: **0800 160 1985** Mon-Fri: 8am-8pm
Sat-Sun: 10am-4pm



To discuss how we can work with you on this project or to ask any questions, please get in touch by emailing: **asbproject@victimsupportscot.org.uk**

Outcomes of our support

VSS provides free, confidential, emotional and practical support for people. Our support can be tailored based on individual needs. This includes:



Emotional Support

Available **in person, via Teams or telephone**, providing a safe space to talk about experiences, understand rights and develop personalised safety plans.

Safety Planning

If personal safety is at risk, VSS can provide **tools, resources and safety planning** to help reduce the risk of harm.

Informed

VSS can help people understand their rights and the criminal justice system, and support engagement with Police, local authorities and housing providers where needed.

Financial

If there has been financial impact, they can be signposted to financial assistance they may be entitled to and/or supported to apply to the Emergency Assistance Fund.

VSS ASB Training Benefits:

- Training is free and tailored to needs
- Delivered either remotely or in-person
- Access to the VSS ASB toolkit to provide to those impacted
- Increased confidence in responding in a victim-centred, lawful way
- Stronger partnership working between VSS & PRS, driving meaningful change

Contents include:

- Real case studies
- Effective ASB case management & reporting
- Gathering evidence for tribunals
- Legal & non-legal powers
- Vulnerabilities & ASB support

VSS Toolkit Overview:

- Upon completion of training, our VSS toolkit will be provided.
- This toolkit will be shaped by lived experience from those who have been impacted by ASB.

Alongside the ASB Support Worker, we will be creating a **safe, supportive and trauma-informed space** for people impacted by anti-social behaviour to:

- Share experiences (if they wish)
- Connect with others who have had similar experiences
- Reduce feelings of isolation
- Review the ASB Toolkit to ensure it reflects lived experience

Thank you for your time!

Happy to answer any questions 😊