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- 1 Promote the work of social housing organisations in the European Union.
- 2 Foster the continuous exchange of ideas and experience among its members.
- 3 Provide an information service for its members
- 4 Promote good practice through conferences, seminars, reports and other activities.
- 5 Monitor developments in European Community Law.
- 6 Provide its members with improved access to European funding.
- 7 Campaign for the right to a decent home for all Europeans.

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SAFE AS HOUSES

EU SOCIAL HOUSING ORGANISATIONS:
PREVENTING AND DEALING WITH ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR



A report for CECODHAS by Bill Randall



Signs of anti-social behaviour across Europe from Copenhagen (top), to Berlin, Brighton and Venice

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SAFE AS HOUSES

EU SOCIAL HOUSING ORGANISATIONS: PREVENTING AND DEALING WITH ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Foreword by David Orr



David Orr, Vice President, CECODHAS,
and Chair of the Housing Association
Section

Housing organisations in the European Union play a key role in preventing and dealing with the problems caused by anti-social behaviour. It is important work, Surveys in Sweden and the UK, for example, reveal that fear of anti-social behaviour and crime heads the list of social housing tenants' concerns.

The bill for dealing with vandalism and graffiti on housing estates is substantial. In the UK it is part of the £3.4 billion estimated annual cost of anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, widespread and consistent anti-social behaviour can make estates unpopular and difficult-to-let with serious financial consequences for social housing organisations.

As this CECODHAS report shows, housing associations, housing companies and local authorities tackle anti-social behaviour on a broad front. Through a range of initiatives they work with communities and young people, in particular, to prevent anti-social behaviour happening in the first place. They seek to avoid many of the problems by good housing and estate design. In some cases, they provide extra security on estates and in neighbourhoods through CCTV and other technology. In others, they pay for extra policing or security company patrols.

Most importantly, perhaps, they practice good housing management. Not surprisingly, most the organisations featured in this report have introduced estate-based management, where their staff are part of the community fabric and work hand in glove with tenants and their organisations.

Partnerships are at the heart of their work. No organisation can deal with anti-social behaviour alone and housing organisations work with the police, social services, local schools, voluntary groups, local businesses and others to make estates safer places where people choose to live.

Marked reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour and an increase in community confidence are the results of this work, all of which helps housing organisations with task of building sustainable communities.

CECODHAS has produced this report with the support of the Building and Social Housing Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, to illustrate and demonstrate the good practice of its members in this important area of work. Anti-social behaviour, of course, is not restricted to social housing estates. It exists in every form of tenure. However, social housing organisations working with others are leading the way in dealing with it.

Through this work they demonstrate, yet again, that they are community builders rather than simply housing providers.

DEALING WITH ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN HOUSING

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IS MAKING THE HEADLINES ACROSS THE EU. A CAUSE FOR GREAT CONCERN AMONG GOVERNMENTS, LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE PUBLIC, IT IS A PARTICULAR CONCERN FOR SOCIAL HOUSING ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR TENANTS WHO ARE OFTEN THE VICTIMS OF INTIMIDATION, VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT.

However, the problems are not confined to the social housing sector, despite the impression given by the media. Private sector tenants and home-owners are also guilty of anti-social behaviour.

There is no precise definition of anti-social behaviour, but the UK organisation Citizens Advice offers the following:

' Broadly, it is acting in a way that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. To be anti-social behaviour, the behaviour must be persistent.

- > There may be a fine line between anti-social behaviour and disputes between neighbours over relatively minor inconveniences, although these may, if persistent, become anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour can include:
- > Intimidation of neighbours and others through threats or actual violence.
- > Harassment, including racial harassment.
- > Verbal abuse.
- > Homophobic behaviour.
- > Systematic bullying of children.
- > Abusive behaviour aimed at causing distress or fear to certain people, for example, elderly or disabled people.
- > Noise.
- > Dumping rubbish and vehicles.
- > Animal nuisance.
- > Vandalism, property damage and graffiti.'

The causes of anti-social behaviour are many. They include the



Schiemond Estate, Rotterdam, where local housing management and partnership working have greatly reduced anti-social behaviour

breakdown of families and communities, unemployment, a lack of youth facilities and youth workers, poor parenting, poor social skills, low self-esteem, gang culture, the illegal dumping of refuse and vehicles and a general lack of community policing.

As this report shows, housing organisations working in the EU use the law as a last resort to deal with anti-social behaviour, preferring to prevent or deal with problems by:

- > Good design and planning of housing and estates.
- > Good housing management.
- > Prevention and intervention, particularly with young people.
- > Working in partnership with the police, local authorities and other organisations.
- > Working with local communities.
- > Security measures.

The case studies in the report chart the successes of housing organisations in several countries. Many of the organisations are using all six approaches listed above, but specific areas of their work have been highlighted to illustrate the different ways they have picked up the challenge. The first example, the work of the Woonbron Housing Association on the Schiemond Estate in Rotterdam (opposite), brings all the strands together.

Schiemonde is a tough inner city estate on the edge of Rotterdam's red-light district. Dubbed 'the shooting area' by locals it was plagued by crime, violence, drug dealers and anti-social behaviour. But since 2001 its stock has risen, thanks to the work of a partnership involving a great many people. Thanks to their work, the estate has moved out of the problem zone in the city council's safety index, which ranks all the 33 large social housing estates in Rotterdam (see page 4). Tenant turnover, another litmus test, halved to 5 per cent during the same period.

The climb up the rankings began with the appointment in 2001 of Iwan Goede as manager of the Woonbron Housing Association estate that has 1,420 flats and is home to about 4,000 people from more than 100 different nations from Morocco to Malacca and from Surinam to Somalia.

Following resident consultation:

- > A speedier maintenance estate-based management service was introduced.
- > A 'garden revolution' saw new fences built, help offered with gardening and transfers offered to ground-floor residents with no interest in gardening.
- > An estate clean-up filled 73 containers with furniture, bicycles, mattresses and other junk.
- > New arrangements were put in place to maintain the new levels of cleanliness.
- > Graffiti was removed.
- > To improve security, entrance doors on each floor of the blocks of flats are locked. Residents have a key only to their own floor.
- > All new tenants sign a rights and responsibilities contract when they move



Estate Manager Iwan Goede with Latifa Kasmi and Saskia Van Den Bosche who are employed by the local school to work with children and parents.

in and are introduced to their neighbours.

- > A street was been gated to keep prostitutes out.

The dozen families who caused a disproportionate amount of the problems on the estate were identified with the help of residents and offered a last chance to stay in the area with the support of social services. Five moved out.

A group of 15 residents set up an estate patrol, which works in shifts to 2 am every night. Significant safety improvements followed.

Iwan Goede and his team are based on the estate and work closely with the community policeman in nearby Delfshaven. The Home on the Streets project has two estate-based staff, working with teenagers and organising a range of activities, among them arts projects and basketball and football tournaments, which are sponsored by the housing association. A new football pitch will be provided with the help of the Johan Cruyff Foundation later this year.

Two community workers are employed by the local school to work with parents and children. Residents own and manage the well-equipped playground and playgroup and organise trips for the children in the



Young people who live on the huge Hellersdorf Estate in Berlin where security guards work closely with residents of all ages to prevent anti-social behaviour



Schiemond good neighbour: Roel Verney who is a member of the neighbourhood patrol group and a volunteer helper at the estate playground

holidays. A tenants' council mediates in anti-social behaviour disputes, and small tenants' groups representing different areas of the estate meet regularly with Goede and his colleagues.

Since the Dutch government gave housing associations permission to sell up to 25 per cent of their housing stock to tenants, Woonbron has sold 26 flats and is aiming to sell another 140 throughout the estate to produce a better social mix.

Goede is going ahead with ambitious plans to sell the roof space on the riverside blocks to developers who will build penthouse suites. One roof site has already been sold.

The money raised from sales will go towards an €18 million facelift for the estate. 'We can't get above 6 on the safety index without investing in the fabric', says Goede.

He also wants to provide a one-stop office for the police, housing staff, social services and other professionals working on the estate in the community centre.

'You have to be here to do the job properly', he argues. 'All the professionals earning their living from this community should be based on the estate.'

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Rotterdam's estate safety index

Since 2001, the Rotterdam Municipality has kept a safety index of the 33 major social housing estates in five areas of the city. Each estate is scored between 1 and 10 and five grades are given:

> Unsafe and dangerous > Serious problems > Safety under threat
> In need of attention > Safe.

The index is based on crime figures, among them those for street violence, domestic violence, burglaries, car thefts and thefts from cars, drug abuse and vandalism.

The published index has helped concentrate the minds of housing organisations. Rotterdam employs a City Marshall works with and encourages housing organisations, the police and others to improve estate safety.

Safety has improved on all the estates, apart from two in the Feyenoord area, since the scores were introduced. Three estates in the city centre have the lowest scores, ranging from 2.7 (unsafe and dangerous) to 4.2 (serious problems). The highest given are 9.4 to an estate in the Feyenoord area) and 8.3 to another in the Charlois district. With three others, these are the only estates in the safe category.

Since 2001 the safety score for the Schiemond Estate has risen from 4.1 (serious problems) to 6 (in need of attention). A higher score cannot be achieved without physical improvements. The Dutch cities of Tilburg, Groningen and Arnhem have also introduced a safety index.

UK introduces tough range of powers

A range of tough powers is available to English and Welsh housing associations and their partners to deal with anti-social behaviour. They include:

Anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) – Legally enforceable court orders banning specified forms of anti-social behaviour, which can be used against children as young as 10. They can also be used to ban people from specified areas. One was used recently to ban a disruptive and violent family from an area of 60 square miles in the North West of England.

ASBOs have also been used against prostitutes, beggars, taggers, fly-posters, drug users and alcoholics. One couple has been banned from drinking in a pub anywhere in the UK.

Courts in England and Wales issued a total of 4,649 ASBOs at a rate of almost 20 a week between their introduction in 1999 and the end of December 2004. Of the total, 2057 orders were issued against young people aged between 10 and 17. Those breaking their orders can be sent to prison for up to five years.

While ASBOs have proved effective in ending neighbourhood misery, their use against children and vulnerable adults, particularly those with learning difficulties and recognised behavioural problems, has been criticised.

Demoted tenancies – A new power, which seeks to deter anti-social behaviour by reducing the security of a tenancy for up to 12 months. To obtain a demotion order an association has to satisfy a court that the tenant had behaved in a way capable of causing nuisance or annoyance. If the anti-social behaviour persists, the association has the right to evict the tenant at the end of the 12-month period. This power has been little used to date.

Acceptable behaviour contracts – Agreements between associations and their tenants that are generally used for more minor cases and younger children.

Parenting orders – Legally binding orders that require parents to take advice on dealing with their children's behaviour.

Injunctions and exclusion orders – Powers to take out injunctions against residents or a member of the general public causing anti-social behaviour.

Vehicle removal – Powers to dispose more easily of abandoned vehicles.

In Scotland ASBOs can be served on young people aged 12 or more, and a children's hearing must be held before a decision is taken on serving an order on anybody aged under 16.

The Irish Government is planning to introduce anti-social behaviour orders in the Autumn of 2005 that will compel offenders to keep the peace for two years. Any breach could result in a prison term of up to six months.

Other European countries rely largely on landlord and tenant legislation to deal with anti-social tenants.

DESIGNING OUT THE PROBLEMS

A GREAT DEAL OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND CRIME CAN BE AVOIDED BY GOOD DESIGN IN HOUSING. TOO OFTEN IN THE PAST, ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS HAVE FAILED TO CONSULT HOUSING PROFESSIONALS, THE POLICE AND RESIDENTS BEFORE AND DURING THE DESIGN PROCESS.

The results, in some cases, have been catastrophic. In Central London, the Holly Street estate of nearly 1,200 houses and flats was demolished in the late 1990s, fewer than 30 years after it was built. The design of 19 five-storey 'snake blocks' with long internal corridors made the estate vulnerable to burglars and muggers. Anti-social behaviour was endemic.

Before the regeneration programme began, 25 per cent of the properties were empty or squatted and 60 per cent of the residents believed the area was dangerous. Following the replacement of the flats with terraced housing based on original 19th century street patterns and designed with the help of residents, a survey revealed that only 5 per cent of residents lived in fear for their safety.

Improved layouts, street lighting and local management have also helped make the estate a safer place. One of four 19-storey tower blocks has been retained and converted for use by people aged



Redesign has brought peace to Rollbergsiedlung's squares.

<< ARCHITECTS AND PLANNERS MUST DESIGN HOUSING AND ESTATES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH RESIDENTS WHERE POSSIBLE >>

over 50. The French concierge system (page 11), which has travelled so successfully across Europe, has been adopted to ensure the security of residents.

Post-regeneration, only 9 per cent of residents believed anti-social behaviour – graffiti, litter and vandalism – was a problem, compared with 78 per cent before the work was carried out.

The lessons from Holly Street and other large regeneration schemes are clear: architects and planners must design housing and estates in partnership with residents where possible. They must talk to housing professionals. Most importantly, as far as security is concerned, they must liaise with the police to design out anti-social behaviour and crime.



Murals, planting and local caretakers help keep down graffiti and vandalism



Lunchtime at an estate community centre



Bench posse at the Rollbergsiedlung

Five large blocks of flats each built around a large internal square on the Rollbergsiedlung Estate in Berlin were a security headache until owners Stadt und Land commissioned a redesign programme.

Major changes to the five-storey 1980s blocks in the inner suburb of Neukölln have brought peace and security to the residents, says estate manager Edda Grater. The public entrances to the squares were shut off with heavy iron gates that are kept permanently locked. Access is now available only to residents, their families and their visitors through the flats. Corridors that ran round the entire length of the blocks were sectioned off, making life more secure for the residents who live on them. CCTV cameras, installed with the overwhelming approval of the residents, keep a watch on who comes and goes in the blocks 24 hours a day. Public lighting was improved in and around the blocks and across the estate.

With the help of local young people, a Portuguese artist painted long murals along the external ground floor walls of the blocks. Combined with extensive planting of shrubs and climbers, it successfully discourages most of the estate's taggers and graffiti artists.

Indeed, a sharp decline in vandalism, graffiti and anti-social behaviour followed the security improvements. Neighbours

still complain about each other's noise, as they might do in any street or square in Europe. Generally, however, the car-free and intensively landscaped squares are safe, green and peaceful havens.

The Rollbergsiedlung estate's 2,180 flats are home to about 5,500 people of 40 different nationalities. The estate has high levels of unemployment and social exclusion. Unemployment among Turkish residents, who account for 21 per cent of the population of the estate, is about 50 per cent. 'We let ten flats last week', says Edda Grater, 'eight to people living on state benefits.'

The estate's image has suffered at the hands of the local media over the years, but more recently it has been making the news for a different reason. Stadt und Land and its partners won the premier award in the Berliner Präventionpreises 2004 for the work of a network that has cut crime and anti-social behaviour on the estate by 21 per cent in recent years.

Through regular meetings and contacts, members of the network exchange ideas and information to promote better communications and greater understanding, says Stadt und Land Group Leader Peter Boltz. 'Five years ago co-operation between police and social workers would have been unthinkable, but the network has brought them together with local schools, residents and community associations.'

Key to the success of the network has been local policing, which has produced informal co-operation between the police and residents and better intelligence about problems on the estate. Special community initiatives include a Turkish-speaking tenants' assembly, a centre for girls from Islamic backgrounds where they can discuss their problems privately and a breakfast club for young Turkish mothers. Local schools work closely with parents. Arab and Turkish associations use the many well-equipped community rooms on the estate for social and cultural gatherings. Kids of all nationalities play football together in the sports courts on the estate.

The combination of design improvements, partnership working and resident involvement is building a safer community at the Rollbergsiedlung.

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Secured by Design is a UK police initiative to encourage architects, planners and builders to adopt crime prevention measures to create safe and secure housing developments by reducing the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour. It has been adopted widely by UK housing associations.

Design features include secure vehicle parking, adequate lighting of communal areas, fostering a sense of ownership of the local environment, control of access to private and common spaces and landscape design supporting natural surveillance and safety.

The main principles of Secured by Design are:

- 1 Local communities should be involved in the planning and design process to help foster community spirit and a sense of shared ownership and responsibility.
- 2 Investment in a well-integrated and co-ordinated approach to design and project planning will pay dividends through resolution of potentially conflicting interests.
- 3 Seek the best available advice from the earliest stages of a project.
- 4 Provision of high-quality landscape settings for housing developments can help create a sense of place and strengthen community identity.
- 5 Well-designed public spaces that are responsive to community needs will tend to be well used and will offer fewer opportunities for crime.
- 6 Long-term maintenance and management arrangements must be considered at an early stage, with ownership, responsibility and resources clearly identified.
- 7 Public and semi-private areas should be readily visible from nearby buildings or from well-used rights of way.
- 8 Natural surveillance should be strongly encouraged. Care is needed to ensure that privacy is not infringed.
- 9 Parking should be provided close to and visible from residents' homes.
- 10 Superfluous and unduly secluded access points and routes should be avoided.
- 11 Access at the rear of buildings should be controlled by lockable gates.
- 12 Roads to groups of buildings should be designed to create a sense of identity, privacy and shared ownership.
- 13 Footpaths and cycleways should be provided, only if they are likely to be well used.
- 14 Footpaths and cycleway design is as important as building design. Where possible, they should be at least 3 metres wide with a 2-metre wide verge on either side and landscaped to avoid creating narrow and threatening corridors.
- 15 Planting should be designed to avoid hiding places. Thorny shrubs can help to deter intruders.
- 16 Good visibility should be maintained from either end and along footpaths and cycleways. Avoid sharp changes in direction.
- 17 Footpaths and cycleways should not be routed at the rear of buildings. If this is unavoidable, a substantial buffer should be planted between a secure boundary fence and the footpath, with planting designed to discourage intruders.
- 18 Where housing developments are next to canals or rivers with a towpath or footpath access, the buildings should face both ways, overlooking the water as well as the street.
- 19 Footpaths and cycleways should be well-lit in built-up areas, except where the route passes through woodland or an ecologically sensitive area. In this case an alternative and well-lit route should be made available.
- 20 Alternative routes to important destinations may be beneficial. However, a balance has to be struck between the advantages of greater choice and the disadvantages of providing additional means of escape or of encouraging inappropriate movement of people.
- 21 In urban areas, open space, footpaths and cycleways should be overlooked from buildings or traffic routes. Buildings should preferably face onto these areas, provided always that acceptable security for rear elevations can still be ensured.
- 22 Property boundaries next to public open space need to be secure, particularly those at the side and rear. Windows should not provide easy access from public land. Substantial buffer planting on the outside of the fence line will help to discourage intruders.
- 23 Improved lighting can reduce fear of crime and the incidence of crime.
- 24 Different lighting sources need to be considered for different environments. The character of the local environment must always be respected.



Toynbee Housing Association Secured by Design scheme in London's East End

MANAGING OUT THE PROBLEMS

GOOD HOUSING MANAGEMENT IS A POWERFUL ANTIDOTE TO ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, AS THE RESIDENTS ON THE TROUBLED PEPERKLIP IN ROTTERDAM WILL TESTIFY. THE ESTATE-BASED TEAM HAS TURNED ROUND WITH A MIXTURE OF STRONG LOCAL MANAGEMENT, ZERO TOLERANCE OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND CLOSE CO-OPERATION WITH THE RESIDENTS.

« LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND GOOD RELATIONSHIPS WITH CUSTOMERS ARE ESSENTIAL, IF ESTATES ARE TO BE SAFE AND SECURE »

However, housing management comes in many other forms, from the traditional concierge system that has served the French so well to more recently introduced tenants' incentives schemes that take a radical approach to the task.

The Irwell Valley Housing Association Gold Service scheme, for instance, recognises those customers who pay their rent and follow the terms of their tenancy agreement. Recognition is in the form of rewards, benefits and discounts, among them faster repairs, an annual cash-back reward, discounted home contents insurance, discounts in many high street stores and access to education and training grants. A spin-off of this scheme has been a reduction of 27 per cent in the UK association's spending on security and dealing with vandalism.

Local management is a feature of all the examples in this report, confirming a common agreement among housing professionals

Architect Carl Weeber (right and opposite) thanks Estate Manager Hans Vliege (centre) and Housemaster Kees van Houdt for looking after his building



from Sweden to Italy that anti-social behaviour and other problems cannot be dealt with properly from a central office. Local knowledge and good relationships with customers are essential, if estates are to be safe and secure.

Employing staff from the minority communities housed on the estates is another common feature of the housing management. More than 100 nationalities are represented on the Schiedmond Estate in Rotterdam, for example. Migrants and their families, most of them Turks, Kurds and North Africans, account for 70 per cent of the residents of the Taastrupgardsvej Estate in Denmark.

Employing staff who speak minority languages and understand other cultures is important for community cohesion on these and other estates. Their work with young people from minority communities is particularly important.



Peperklip building, Rotterdam. Rescued from the twilight zone by good housing management

'It's the first time anybody has looked after my building properly', said architect Carel Weeber on his first visit in 20 years to his Peperklip housing scheme in Rotterdam. Applauded for its design when it opened in 1983, the 500m-long building, which is shaped like a paper clip, quickly became celebrated for all the wrong reasons.

By the time the Vestia housing association took over the estate in 2003, the scheme was corroded by anti-social behaviour, crime and drugs and demonised in the local and national media. 'Peperklip Ghetto gripped with terror' was a typical newspaper headline. As a result flats were difficult to let.

In little more than two years Estate Manager Hans Vliege has changed all that with the help of his Housemaster Kees van Houdt, who is a sort of Supercaretaker, local residents and the police. A combination of zero tolerance of the activities of anti-social tenants and community engagement with their law-abiding neighbours, who make up the overwhelming majority of the Peperklip's



2,200 residents, has seen a dramatic fall in crime, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

The new team's first task was to deal with serious trouble-makers. 'We didn't know who was causing the problems, but their neighbours did', says Hans Vliege. 'We offered anonymity to those who helped us.' Armed with residents' evidence, they persuaded a judge to sanction the eviction of three families who made life on the estate a misery for others.

Other anti-social families took note and cleaned up their act.

Another early target was illegal sub-letting. Two groups of illegal immigrants in possession of guns and a large amount

of Euros were among those evicted with the help of the police.

As part of a general clean up a tough line is taken with residents who dump their rubbish in the estate's common areas, sometimes by the simple practice of throwing it off seventh floor balconies. Bags are searched, culprits identified and given a €55 fine. When the refuse blitz was launched, 40 to 50 fines a day were issued. Now a fine is a rarity.

Tough action is also taken with bikes and prams left in stairwells and entrances rather than the sheds provided. They are chained up. Residents pay a fine to liberate them. Splash-back aluminium floors and CCTV cameras have stopped the use of lifts as lavatories.

Community engagement has gone hand in hand with this robust approach. The tenants' association works closely with Hans Vliege and his colleagues. Summer camps and activities are provided for the children of the Peperklip. Those who help with at least five of the regular estate clean-ups are rewarded with a trip to the zoo and spending money. An enclosed sports court is used constantly by older kids of all ages, and a playground occupies the younger children. A kindergarten offers care by ➤

trained people, and a meeting room for women has been provided.

Residents are drawn from about 60 nationalities. 29 per cent are Dutch, with Turks and Moroccans the next largest groups. 'People are isolated by their cultures and language, and some of them need educating in urban living,' says Hans Vliege. 'It's all part of our job.'

The mix in the estate is changing. Households in one corner of the

Peperklip have been offered €5,000 each to

move elsewhere on the estate to release 50 flats for students, and the housing association plans to sell between 10 and 20 per cent of the flats to produce a better social mix, an initiative that would have been unthinkable only two years ago.

'It's looking good now', said Carel Weeber of his famous creation. Peperklip residents, who live in a safer and cleaner environment, would second the architect's view.

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Kindergarten at the Peperklip



The local housing company, residents, the police and other partners have taken joint action to reduce anti-social behaviour in the Österängen neighbourhood (right) in the southern Swedish town of Jönköping. Experience in Sweden and other countries confirms that housing organisations cannot solve anti-social behaviour without the help of residents and other organisations.

Anti-social behaviour is a growing problem on many social housing estates in Sweden. Tenants surveyed about their housing conditions, consistently name safety as their greatest concern.

Prompted by this concern SABO (the Swedish association of municipal housing companies) and five of its members launched a project in 1999 to identify ways of dealing with the problems.

Österängen was one of the study areas. The local social housing company, Bostads AB VätterHem, owns 1,800 of the 1,950 flats in the neighbourhood. Built at the end of the 1950s and the early 1960s, the flats are in medium and high-rise blocks.

Almost 50 per cent of the residents are migrants from other countries. Single-person households form the largest group. The percentage of unemployed residents in Österängen and those collecting state subsidies or early retirement pensions is higher than in the rest of the town.

The Österängen study began with a survey among residents. A large majority – 82 per cent – said crime and anti-social behaviour was a problem, and 34 per cent felt unsafe when they went out alone in the evening. The survey informed a mapping exercise that identified the corners of the neighbourhood where people felt most unsafe. 'Key People' – residents or those working in the area – were asked what they thought about the problems and what they felt should be done to improve the situation.

A lawyer, a policeman, a sociologist and housing company staff made up an expert group that analysed the survey results and compared them with findings from similar studies in other areas. They also considered the 'Key People' interviews.

After discussions with residents and the police and other partners, the housing company:



- > Increased the number of local staff and extended the opening hours of the Österängen office.
- > Improved lighting in streets and public spaces.
- > Introduced traffic safety measures.
- > Built a new garage.
- > Built a new playground.
- > Restored a large area of public open space.

Voluntary organisations raised funding for activities for young people.

The police and security companies stepped up their work in the neighbourhood

A follow-up survey in 2003 revealed that reported crime and anti-social behaviour had decreased by 20 per cent and residents generally felt safer. However, there were calls for more police and better street lighting, and there were still public spaces that people avoided.

Swedish housing companies arrange 'safety walks', usually after dark, where residents and housing company staff walk a neighbourhood and identify poorly lit corners and high-risk crime spots. Immediate action is needed after these walks, if public confidence is to be maintained.

It is essential to respond swiftly to anti-social behaviour and small crimes, particularly in the case of young people who might move on to more serious crime, if their behaviour goes unchallenged. Local residents should have the confidence to rebuke those guilty of anti-social behaviour. Housing organisations can promote confidence by taking action to deal with the problems and by working closely with residents.

Patience is an essential quality for anybody dealing with anti-social behaviour. It takes a long time to change the conditions on an estate and even more time to change its reputation to the point where people want to move there.

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A local service, which has its roots in the traditional concierge system that dates back to the 18th century, provides the foundations of French housing management. All social and private landlords people must provide a gardien d'immeubles, or local housing manager, in developments of more than 100 flats or houses in communities of more than 25,000 people and in 'sensitive' urban areas.

The law introducing this system came into force at the beginning of 2003, after several years of lobbying by housing professionals and others who believe local management promotes social cohesion and urban solidarity. Indeed, the gardiens have shown they can play a key role in preventing and dealing with anti-social behaviour and mediating in neighbour disputes.

According to a survey by the Fédération des sociétés anonymes d'Hlm, the number of gardiens employed by its 305 members to provide local management of their 1.8 million homes grew from 5,670 in 1988 to 6,800 in 2003. On average each gardien managed an average of 159 homes, usually in urban regeneration areas.

Generally, they lived in a ground floor flat in the building they manage and worked just over 45 hours a week. The paid work is shared by couples in about 25 per cent of the buildings. Those who work alone often have the unpaid help of a spouse or partner.

Gardiens d'immeubles are given a great deal of autonomy in their work, which enables them to respond flexibly to unforeseen crises and tenants' requests. Main areas of work flagged up in the survey were maintenance and technical management, administration and financial management, providing tenant services and dealing with household waste.

Most tenants are satisfied with their homes and their neighbourhoods, the gardiens told the survey. Their main concerns were a lack of services, noise, security, the quality and cleanliness of the local environment and their fear that their

estate or block of flats was becoming housing of last resort for impoverished people.

Almost 75 per cent of the gardiens were happy with their relationships with their managers, although many felt trapped 'between the hammer and the anvil' and wanted greater contact with others doing the same job. 89 per cent said they enjoyed their work.

Good relations with tenants, which are the key to their work, was the reason given by most of the gardiens for their job satisfaction. Helping tenants with their problems in ways that are not always in their job description, means that the line between official and voluntary work becomes blurred. While the gardiens are willing to mediate in tenant disputes, they do not want to be involved in dealing with organised crime and violence.

Hlm organisations recognise the value of the on-the-spot presence of the gardiens and are committed to supporting the model. Two issues, however, threaten its future:

- > The growing reluctance of gardiens to live 'on the job' on the estates and in the buildings where they work.
- > The legal reduction in working time to 35 hours a week.

The way other countries have embraced and adapted the French concierge system is testament to its success.

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INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

AS THE CASE STUDIES IN THIS SECTION SHOW, HOUSING ORGANISATIONS HAVE HAD REMARKABLE SUCCESS WITH INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION, PARTICULARLY WITH YOUNGER PEOPLE.

Their intervention has yielded many benefits, among them reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour, health and education improvements and improved self-esteem.

Parent involvement has produced greater social cohesion.

Intervention and prevention are not cheap options, but in the long run they are cheaper than dealing with vandalism, violence and graffiti and less damaging to communities. Nor are they a quick fix. To have a lasting effect, housing associations and their partners must be prepared for the long haul and to dig deep in their pockets to employ specialist staff and fund sports and other facilities.

When working with young people it is vital to seek their views and involve them in the planning and management of projects. Says Sharon Brash, from the Youth Scheme at the Rathenraw, a Northern Ireland Housing Executive estate in Antrim:

'Young people often feel they are seen as a problem and consider themselves as the victims. They often wish to be involved in finding solutions to problems and, in fact, it is imperative to work with young people in any project that affects them and their community.'

As the Danes and others have found, providing father figures can be very important for boys and young men who come from fractured backgrounds and have grown up with very little male influence. Inter-generational contacts are also important. Many young people grow up with little or no experience of older people. On the other hand, older people can overcome their fear of crime through contact with young people and can discover that a kid in a hood is not necessary a criminal or a nuisance.



« IT IS IMPERATIVE TO WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN ANY PROJECT THAT AFFECTS THEM AND THEIR COMMUNITY »»



Building a BMX track has changed the lives of local kids at the Mount Pleasant Estate

Anti-social behaviour has fallen on a Weaver Vale Housing Trust in Winsford, Cheshire, since a BMX track and skate park was built for young people. Sitting in one of the most deprived areas in England, the estate has experienced a familiar set of problems, among them anti-social behaviour, and has been identified as an area of high family stress.

After lengthy consultations with the local kids, the BMX track and skate park was built through a partnership that included the housing trust, the residents' association, Cheshire Police, and Groundwork – a national not for profit community development organisation. The track was designed with the help of a user-group, and 14 organisations footed the £160,000 bill, among them local authorities, local businesses and a bank.

The scheme is a huge success. The track and skate park are in constant use, and the newly formed Gravel Grippers BMX club has 75 members who train three times a week and takes part in competitions.

The scheme is finished off with a teen shelter, lighting and fencing, and a clubroom and storage are housed under the track's ramp. Club members maintain the track with the help of their parents and other supporters. A local business and a charity are funding the club's running costs and helped buy the bikes and safety equipment to make sure nobody is financially excluded.

Coaching by the British Cycling Federation revealed that many club members had neither the strength nor the stamina required for BMX competition. Living on a diet of processed food, crisps, fizzy drinks

and chocolate, most of them were unfit. Fruit bars have replaced the crisps and chocolate on sale at the clubroom, and fresh fruit is provided on competition days. The bikers and other kids from the estate take part in training sessions and other exercise. Fitter and stronger, they are burning off excess energy that might otherwise have been put to less fruitful purpose.

The benefits for community cohesion are many. Anti-social behaviour on the estate has declined since the facilities opened, say the police. Local teachers report an improved attention span and interest in lessons among the bikers and boarders, who are also showing a greater sense of responsibility and a greater ability to work in teams.

The BMX team and its supporters travel to take part in competitions, taking otherwise isolated young people into the wider world. The icing on the community cake came when seven Gravel Grippers qualified for the British BMX championships. Three finished in the top ten nationwide, adding individual and community self-esteem to the list of benefits that flow from the project.

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Cricket is part of Testway 7's summer sports programme

Hampshire-based Testway Housing has harnessed the power of sport to divert 6 to 15 year olds away from anti-social behaviour. The Testway 7 summer sports programme is now in its fifth year and has helped reduce school holiday crime and nuisance rates on targeted neighbourhoods where the association works by almost 70 per cent.

Working with Hampshire police and the local youth offending team, the project targets and ensures the involvement of known offenders or those at risk of offending, although the scheme is open to all children.

Boys' rugby, girls' football and cricket are organised throughout the summer holidays. Fishing was added to the list of activities for the first time this year.

Training is usually run twice a week throughout the holiday and youngsters are awarded points for attendance, good behaviour, attitude and effort. The children with the highest points win special prizes.

All those who register, take part, stay out of trouble for the whole of the holiday and do not come to the notice of the police or Testway for all six weeks, are invited to a special finals day celebration. The project also encourages healthy eating and living and provides drug and alcohol awareness training for staff, neighbourhood wardens, sports coaches, parents and other adults.

A long list of partners works together to develop the sports programme, including Andover Rugby Club, Andover Football Club, Test Valley Borough Council, the



Fishing is among the activities organised for kids under the Testway

police, the youth service and the Andover Family Learning Partnership.

Parents work closely with the project officer on the development of the activities, take first aid and coaching courses and help young people produce computer diaries to record their personal development and thoughts about the project.

At the end of each project the young people are asked to complete postal/telephone surveys to provide evaluation information.

Apart from the fall in youth crime and anti-social behaviour recorded by the police,

CASE STUDY Dundee City Council Scotland



7 initiative

Since 1995 Dundee City Council and the UK children's charity NCH have given family support to anti-social households who disrupt their communities and are in danger of losing their tenancies through the Dundee Families Project, which costs about £350,000 a year to run. However, it saves the Scottish council about £450,000 in legal and other costs. It has helped many families and their neighbours lead a more peaceful and settled life. Almost 200 families have been helped since the project opened its doors.

NCH and council staff work with tenants to change destructive patterns. The project has three main elements:

- > A family support unit of four flats, where residents facing eviction are offered alternative accommodation with intensive support and counselling.
- > 12 dispersed flats where floating support is provided, principally to families who have moved on from the support unit.
- > An outreach service that provides support to families whose anti-social behaviour puts them at risk of losing their council homes.

The project offers a range of group activities alongside the support and counselling. These include:

- > After school groups
- > Young persons group
- > Cookery group
- > Parenting group
- > Parenting skills group
- > Craft group
- > Anger management group
- > Residents support group
- > Tenancy workshops.

NCH is a partner in a similar voluntary scheme with Manchester City Council, which works with disruptive households facing eviction who are offered the alternative of moving into a family support unit of five flats.

Residents sign up for a strict code of behaviour, which includes not disturbing neighbours. In return they get 24-hour support with the business of life, including assistance with getting up in the morning, preparing breakfast, getting children to school, and organising homework in the evening.

Other local authorities have followed Dundee's lead and set up similar projects. While all these schemes are voluntary, UK Government Ministers have suggested a compulsory scheme might be introduced.

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the fire service has reported reductions in the number of rubbish fires and hoax calls. More than 80 per cent of parents have seen an improvement in the children's behaviour. All the participants with a previous history of anti-social behaviour who played sport last year stayed out of trouble throughout the summer. Many have gone on to be active members of local sports teams. Little more than 50 per cent of the children had played organised sport before, and the project also has the benefit of bring together children who might otherwise be isolated.

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CASE STUDY EFIDIS Housing Group France

Seven young people recently helped build a children's playground at Montreuil, Ile de France, for a project run by Solidarité Français Migrants (FM).

The work was carried out through an initiative run by French Housing Group EFIDIS, which organises building and training schemes on its estates for young people during the school holidays.

'I liked working in a team and with my friends, and I have acquired new skills',

says Charlie Lepage, one of the young builders. 'I want more professional experience because finding a job is not easy today.'

The housing group, which has 44,000 homes, runs citizenship courses for young delinquents and works with schools and colleges on anti-vandalism initiatives. It also organises district festivals and sporting events.

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WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

IN MANY WAYS LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE HOUSING ORGANISATIONS' MOST IMPORTANT PARTNERS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR. THEY ARE THE MOST RELIABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT IS GOING IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOODS AND THEY CAN HELP HOUSING ORGANISATIONS, THE POLICE AND OTHERS IDENTIFY THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE CAUSING PROBLEMS.

<< MANY OF THE BEST IDEAS FOR THE PREVENTION OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR COME FROM TENANTS >>



Luigi Marioni (left) and Leno Gadotti, elected tenant leaders who organise the tenants' work in neighbouring blocks in Trento

They are also a valuable resource. Local community members sit on management committees, estate boards and tenant organisations. Many of the best ideas for the prevention of anti-social behaviour come from tenants. Tenants make up the majority of Glasgow's Reidvale Housing Association, for example, and it was their wish to buy police overtime to make the streets in the neighbourhood safer at night.

In Rotterdam tenants provide regular and unpaid night-time security patrols that have helped reduce anti-social behaviour and crime on a large inner-city estate. In Trento (right) they organise and carry out the cleaning of the common areas and surroundings in the blocks of flats where they live. On many estates across Europe they help organise sports and social activities for young people.

All the organisations featured in this report listen to their tenants before they take action on anti-social behaviour or introduce measures to prevent it. And they have good reason too. Most people living on social housing estates are not involved in crime or anti-social behaviour. They bring their families up straight and true, often in very difficult circumstances.

Indeed, they are generally the victims whose lives are made a misery by the actions of a relatively small number of 'neighbours from hell' who create havoc around them. They have a vested interest in making their estates and homes safer places to live.



Trento estate kept spotlessly clean with the tenants' help

A strong sense of community runs through the ancient city streets and isolated mountain valleys of Trentino in Northern Italy. It is expressed through the work of many co-operatives that provide social care, housing, transport and other services in every corner of the semi-autonomous province.

And it gives a special flavour to the management of the 600 blocks of flats owned by the public housing organisation Istituto Trentino Edilizia Abitativa (ITEA). Tenants in each block elect a Capo di Casa, or Responsible Tenant, who organises the daily cleaning of the corridors, lifts and common areas in the block and the immediate surrounding area. The Responsible Tenants, who are all volunteers, provide a strong link between ITEA and its customers and with the local police and other agencies.

Among the 600 are Luigi Mancini and Lino Gadotti, Capo di Casa in neighbouring blocks in Trento, the provincial capital. Elected in 1999 when the flats were first occupied, they draw up and organise the cleaning rotas that keep the blocks and their surroundings spotlessly clean.

Tenant participation in this work is not an optional extra. The tenancy regulations clearly state that, if blocks are not kept clean, ITEA will have the work done and send the bill to the tenants. In the event, this very rarely happens. Tenants are also charged for damage to common areas.

The Responsible Tenants have their own budgets that are funded by their neighbours. Calculated on the size of each flat, the fee in the Trento blocks ranges from €107 to €223 a year. 'We've had no problem collecting the money since we started six years ago,' says Luigi, who is responsible for a block with 39 flats housing a mix of traditional families, one-parent families and single people.

Next door, Lino looks after 48 flats of the same mixture with the added ingredient of two flats for vulnerable teenagers managed by a housing co-operative.

Each block has its own front door and separate staircase. Flourishing local shops occupy the ground floor, among them a pharmacy whose night-time customers cause problems around the block entrances. Door-entry systems keep the problems out of the staircases and corridors. Well-ordered as it is, Trentino is not immune to the problems caused by drug abuse. ➤



Stefano Petrolimi (Co-ordinator) and Francesca Cortelletti (Mediator) of the Kaleidoscope Co-op who manage 700 ITEA flats in Trento



Mediator Dr Ubaldo Gervasoni (left) listens to a tenant's problems

Luigi and Lino are elected each year at a tenants' meeting. 'Our work is appreciated', says Lino, 'especially among the older residents. There is a general spirit of helping people. It is a good system.'

That general spirit goes beyond looking after buildings. The volunteers are also a first point of mediation in neighbour disputes and help tenants with a host of day-to-day problems. 'It is a 24-hour job', says Luigi. 'We are never off duty.'

Recognising the value of the volunteers' work, ITEA has begun a series of training courses to develop their skills. Subjects covered include legal issues, neighbour relations, mediation and relationships with ITEA.

The work of the 600 volunteers is an integral part of ITEA's approach to dealing with anti-social behaviour. Most of the problems are low-key. Serious anti-social behaviour and safety are not the chief concern among ITEA's 9,000 tenants, which is out of keeping with many other parts of Europe. In 2004, noise (28 per cent) was the chief cause of complaint, followed by pets (19 per cent) and parking (12 per cent). The three staff who work full-time dealing with complaints and problems made 786 interventions during the year. 'Their work has seen the number of complaints fall to 92 in 2004 from 231 in 2000', says Daniela Laghi, ITEA's Director of Customer Services.

Under a three-year contract, the Kaleidoscope Co-operative manages 700

ITEA homes in Trento, Rovereto and Riva del Garda, the most densely populated areas of the province. The six-strong team intervenes early in any disputes, most of which centre on children, parking and noise. 'If there is a problem, we must be there quickly', says Kaleidoscope Co-ordinator, Stefano Petrolini.

The team includes mediator, Francesca Cortelletti, who works principally on the resolution of disputes between tenants and owners – former tenants who have bought their flats – and between Italian tenants and migrants. Most of the migrants are from Eastern Europe and North Africa and are isolated by their languages. All tenants and owners are brought together twice a year to discuss their problems.

Any neighbour disputes that cannot be resolved by Stefano and his colleagues are referred to Dr Ubaldo Gervasoni, ITEA's Conflict Mediator (see right).

ITEA has agreements with several social co-ops who provide support to vulnerable tenants, among them people with mental health problems, who have trouble maintaining their tenancies. The co-ops take over full responsibility for the management of their flats for an agreed period and work closely with the tenants to help them move towards independent living.

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Mediation: another way of resolving conflicts

'The conflict is the beginning of the solution,' says mediation expert Dr Ubaldo Gervasoni who has worked full-time for ITEA for the past four years. He deals with family conflicts and neighbour disputes and works with households who get behind with the rent. 'My aim always is to avoid the need for legal resolutions,' he says.

In 2004 he dealt with 150 serious cases, which were passed on to him after first attempts at mediation by front line staff and Responsible Tenants had failed. He holds separate meetings with those in dispute before bringing them together on neutral territory to discuss their differences. Each case can take up to five or six meetings. Although his work is producing good results, solutions cannot be guaranteed. 'Many of my clients are very angry when they first come to me and my initial task is to calm them down.'

Clients' underlying problems are often the key to their actions, he says. Identifying them and encouraging people to confront them directly is an important part of the work. Many tenants with serious rent arrears, he says, do not realise they can be evicted if they are more than three months behind with their rent.

Dr Gervasoni uses a French model in his work – Systematic mediation in social communities. 'It offers a platform for constructing local communities rather than single relationships. ITEA, which houses about 20,000 of Trentino's 500,000 citizens, is giving a lead for social change in the province.'

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

'WE CAN'T DEAL WITH ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ON OUR OWN', SAYS IWAN GOEDE, MANAGER OF THE SCHIEMOND ESTATE IN ROTTERDAM. 'WE MUST ALL WORK TOGETHER.'



The team that has turned round the Taastrupgardsvej Estate, Copenhagen (left to right): Jesper Bengtson, Team Chief of the one-stop office; Ahmed Nihrane, who runs the job centre; Tenant Counsellor Stig Bo Kristensen and Estate Manager Finn Larsen.

« PARTNERSHIPS ARE BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS. WORKING TOGETHER IS SEEN AS THE ONLY WAY FORWARD, AND IT HAS PRODUCED SIGNIFICANT RESULTS »»

Housing professionals across the EU share his view. They have set up partnerships with many organisations, among them the police, probation services, schools, social services, faith groups, community organisations, health services, residents' groups and local businesses to address the problems and, where possible, prevent them happening in the first place. In some cases one-stop shops offering access to all these services have opened on estates.

Partnerships are breaking down the barriers. Working together is seen as the only way forward, and it has produced significant results, like the creation of more than 300 jobs in and around the Taastrupgardsvej Estate in Denmark (above) and the BMX track in Cheshire, England, (page 13).

The advantages of the common approach are many. It ends the duplication of effort and the waste of resources, and it makes life

easier for tenants who have one organisation to deal with, rather than several.

Each profession or organisation brings its expertise to the table. Joint funding produces projects that would never see the light of day, if it were left to housing organisations to fund them alone from their limited resources. Common approaches and service standards are developed

And the professions are learning from each other. Through regular meetings and contacts, partners exchange ideas and information to promote better communications and greater understanding.

'Five years ago co-operation between police and social workers would have been unthinkable, but our network has brought them together with local schools, residents and community associations,' says Peter Boltz who works for Stadt und Land in Berlin.

Stig Bo Kristensen is one of 62 Tenant Counsellors employed through a national programme on estates across Denmark, working with tenants and local organisations to promote social cohesion and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.

Each of the Counsellors is funded by the housing association they work with (25 per cent), the local authority (25 per cent) and the National Building Fund (50 per cent), which raises 1 Billion Danish Kroner (€134,14 million) from housing association rents every year. The money is used to support housing association work and renovations and improvements.

For the past ten years Kristensen has worked at the Taastrupgardsvej Estate outside Copenhagen, bringing together the many agencies who work with the community. An AKB Housing Association development, the estate:

- Was built in the 1970s and has 912 flats.
- Has undergone a rolling programme of improvements and refurbishments that have seen underground garages closed and street lighting and security improved.
- Houses nearly 2,500 residents from 40 different nations.
- 70 per cent of the tenants are migrants.
- Almost one third of the residents are of Turkish origin.
- 47 per cent of the residents are aged 24 or under.
- The average income is less than two thirds of the national average.

'Many people from the migrant communities are isolated, unemployed, have few skills and speak little Danish,' says Kristensen. 'The young people see no



future after school, and there are serious drug and alcohol problems'.

With the probation service, the police, local schools and social services, he works with the young people at risk and those most likely to get into trouble. 'We offer to get them back into school or the labour market and help them with their general problems. Those who have been turned away by their families are housed in small flats on the estate.' Trips and outings are organised for all the children and young people on the estate. Strong links have been forged with local sports organisations.

A club for young people in need of special support is among the 23 that are run in the many community rooms on the estate. Other special initiatives include Burnt Rubber, a go-kart club that was started five years ago for under-18s with two soldiers acting as Father Figures to the club members, many of whom have little relationship with their own fathers.

The club now has five Father Figures and is funded by the local authority, Høje-Taastrup Kommune. It is typical of Kristensen's work, which attracts a great deal of media attention. He works with residents to identify a problem, sets up a pilot project to address it and passes it on to a mainstream funder. Another project has been set up to work with young men

aged between 18 and 24.

'The aim of these two projects is to cut off the supply of young men passing from school into crime. We also talk to parents about taking responsibility for their children,' says Kristensen. 'A very wide range of social control has been established. The boys know that we know what they are doing and they know we have very strong links with social services and the local police who are known by name to everybody on the estate. We will always take back and work with people who have been to prison, unless they are violent, and AKB will always help people with problems rather than evict them.'

Jobs and training

A partnership between the housing association, the Kommune, local businesses and tenants has set up Job Expres, an employment and training organisation, with the support of the Minister of Integration. Based in offices on the estate and run by Ahmed Nihrane, it employs four staff to develop relationships between local businesses and minority groups. It has found employment for 320 people, 200 of them from the estate, and part-time work for 50 under-18s.

'Job Expres has been a great success', says Kristensen. 'It has increased the income on the estate, helped to integrate residents into the wider community and takes young men





Catching them young

Clubs, playgrounds a kindergarten, a 'safe building site' (right) and a city farm are on offer to young people on a large estate owned by the Copenhagen Social and Philanthropic Housing Association.

A special club has been set up for young people who do not join mainstream clubs. More than 40 social projects for people of all ages are organised on the estate of 2,500 flats, which has a large community centre and more than 20 club rooms.

away from the streets and trouble.'

From Job Expres clients can walk straight into the Taastrupgrad Lokalcenter, a one-stop shop set up in partnership with the Kommune. It employs 14 front-line staff supplying a full set of town hall services, including welfare benefits. 'Anybody inquiring about benefits is sent along to Ahmed and his colleagues to see about a job', says Kristensen. 'In a centre created from eight small ground floor flats, we have every service the community needs, including Danish language classes for isolated young women from Moslem families. The classes were set up with the support of the local Imam and are a first step in integrating the women into the wider community.'

Kristensen's work is supported by the largely Danish tenants' organisation, whose members benefit from its successes. Indeed over the past five years, crime and anti-social behaviour on the estate have been reduced by 20 per cent. 'We have raised the community's confidence and sense of security,' he says. 'Fear of crime and anti-social behaviour no longer dominates tenants' meetings and the complaints we receive.'

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A partnership between regional and local government, residents and the Anaquerando Gypsy Association is rescuing a neighbourhood in Granada from social exclusion and poverty in a €3 million regeneration scheme. All the partners agree that only by encouraging and maintaining the participation of the residents is it possible to make the most of the investment, guarantee respect for the work done and ensure a sustainable future for the community.

The Molino Nuevo neighbourhood of Granada is a product of Spanish social housing policy of the 1960s and 1970s. The large development of 160 flats in 10 blocks is isolated from the city, and its residents have been uprooted from other urban areas and seriously marginalised.

When the Autonomous Community of Andalusia and its partners launched a €3 million regeneration programme to transform the neighbourhood, drug abuse, unemployment and poverty were widespread, crime levels were high and the community framework had broken down. Residents felt they didn't belong, were reluctant to use the social services and had no confidence in the many agencies they dealt with.

The regeneration programme is managed from a multi-disciplinary office on the estate where staff work closely with residents. By involving local people in the work of the regeneration programme, the partnership is restoring a sense of community. At the same time, the physical fabric of the estate is undergoing a complete transformation. The flats, which were in serious disrepair, are the subject of a major improvement scheme and environmental improvements are in hand.

Skills-training for residents is a major component of the programme. A Hands-on School set up by the Anaquerando Gypsy Association offers building skills training for young people. It has trained 60 young people from the area in different construction-related jobs, which they have put to good use in the renovation of their own homes. Some are now working for mainstream construction companies.

An adult construction-training scheme has helped 80 local unemployed people find jobs, half of them with construction companies. As a result, a total of 250 months' worth of salaries has gone directly to residents of the area and boosted the local economy by more than €460,000.

Resident participation has yielded positive benefits. The greatest advocates and defenders of the project are those local men and women who have taken part in its work. The vast majority of people living in the neighbourhood want a normal life, free of crime and anti-social behaviour and support the work of the project. They co-operate with the police and other agencies and are willing to report any problems on the estate.

A social contract has been introduced in the neighbourhood with the support of an Environment Education Programme, which explains how the contract works and spells out the rights and responsibilities of both the tenants and their landlord. The participation of the Anaquerando Gypsy Association has been fundamental to the success of this work.

The achievements of the project are the result of the work of the many organisations working in the partnership. Alongside the physical regeneration and the education programme, a drugs education program and several social assistance initiatives have been launched. Co-ordinating the work of the many agencies is a current challenge for the partnership.

The project has proved a great success, and is rolling out across the entire Almanjayer district of Granada, which has 5,000 flats and 20,000 residents.

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IMPROVING ESTATE SECURITY

CONCERNED BY LEVELS OF CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, A NUMBER OF EUROPEAN HOUSING ORGANISATIONS ARE TURNING TO POLICE FORCES AND PRIVATE SECURITY ORGANISATIONS TO PATROL THEIR ESTATES OR THE NEIGHBOURHOODS WHERE THEY WORK.

« THE REMOVAL OF POLICE FROM THE
STREETS IN MANY EU COUNTRIES IS A CAUSE
FOR CONCERN AMONG THEIR CITIZENS »



As the example on page 24 shows, Reidvale Housing Association buys police overtime to provide highly visible street patrols in the area of Glasgow where it operates. Other housing associations in England have taken a similar route, sometimes for a limited period to deal with eruptions of anti-social behaviour and crime.

In Berlin, Stadt und Land hires a private security firm to patrol its estates in the Hellersdorf area on the eastern fringes of the city.

The return on the investment, says both organisations, is a reduction in vandalism, criminal damage, graffiti and street violence and an increase in community confidence. Residents, particularly older people, welcome the extra security the patrols provide.

In the Netherlands, volunteer resident patrols are out every night on the Woonbron Housing Association Schiedmond Estate to the same effect, but with the added value of a deep community commitment. In Copenhagen the Night Ravens, a volunteer group

with about 25 members, patrols the streets of the (name) estate.

The removal of police from the streets in many EU countries is a cause for concern among their citizens. Police forces across Europe, led by France and Germany, are now redressing the balance by introducing community policing and working more closely with social work agencies and local communities. The UK has launched a policy of neighbourhood policing, concentrating resources on those communities with the highest rates of crime and anti-social behaviour. Critics in all countries claim that a great many promises have been made about community and neighbourhood policing, but there is very little of it on the ground.

All the housing organisations that have introduced tighter security are also promoting greater community safety through good housing management practice and the prevention of anti-social behaviour, especially among young people. Police patrols on their own are not enough.



All the flats on the huge estate have been given a facelift since German reunification



Two teams of security guards keep a watching eye on the Hellsdorf estate every night of the week

The massive Hellersdorf development on the fringe of the former East Berlin was the last major housing act of the communist regime in the city. Work started on the 48,000 battleship-grey flats in 1986 and was finished after reunification. Many of the flats have been sold to residents or to newly formed co-operatives to help cover the overhanging debt the development brought with it. Some of the tower blocks have been demolished because of low demand. Housing company Stadt und Land owns and manages the 17,000 flats that remain in public ownership.

A drop in the birth rate after reunification produced a rapid change in the population profile at Hellersdorf. The average age has risen as young people have left the neighbourhood, where unemployment stands at 17 per cent, to find work and training. Letting family flats has become a problem, and 20 per cent of the larger flats are empty in some of the estates. Kindergartens and schools have closed because of low demand.

Since 1990, Stadt und Land has been working on estate improvements. The exteriors of the blocks in each neighbourhood have been redesigned and clad to give them a distinctive and more colourful appearance. Interior courts have been landscaped to provide high-quality and car-free open spaces.

Many of the clubs and facilities provided for younger people in the early 1990s have become the victims of the German economic recession, closing their doors following the removal of the state subsidies that met staff costs.

Since 2003 Stadt und Land has used a private security company to patrol the estate every night for six hours during the week and eight hours at weekends. Core hours are 18.00 to midnight, but the times and patrol routes are varied to preserve an element of surprise.

Two teams of two uniformed and highly visible security guards drive around the estate, patrolling the streets and inner

courts. In winter, in particular, they patrol the corridors and basements. Alcohol and street drinking are a bigger problem than drugs, and young people cause most of the problems. Tenants can call the guards on an emergency number, if they have any problems.

The security company produces a weekly report for Stadt und Land, which identifies trouble-makers and trouble-spots. In serious cases the security organisation will attend meetings with parents and Stadt und Land. Parents are held responsible for the actions of children who repeatedly cause problems and are warned that they may lose their flat, if their children's behaviour does not improve.

'The patrols have significantly reduced crime, vandalism, graffiti and anti-social behaviour in Hellersdorf,' says Stadt und Land's local manager Ms Brosch-Borchmann. 'Their work has also meant fewer confrontations for housing staff. We tried to deal with the problems in-house initially, but staff found it very stressful and we did not have much effect.'

The security patrols also deal with illegal parking. Drivers are given two warnings before their cars are towed away for a third offence. Reclaiming a car costs nearly €200.

'At first tenants were opposed to the idea,' says Ms Brosch-Borchmann. 'But with illegal parking reduced from 200 to 6 incidents a week and a fall in damage to cars and theft from cars they now appreciate its value.'

The housing company meets the cost of the security service, which is about €30 a year per household, from its own reserves. 'The advantages outweigh the cost', she says.

'The organisation is saving money on repair bills and the cost of removing graffiti, and a survey among our tenants confirmed overwhelmingly that they feel more secure since the patrols started. The patrols have changed the behaviour of many people who used to cause problems. They know about the patrols and the emergency call service, and they know they will be caught if they misbehave.'

In 2004-2005 Reidvale Housing Association spent £15,000 on 750 hours of police over-time in the Dennistoun neighbourhood of Glasgow where it works.

Under the scheme, two community police officers patrolled the area for four hours in the evening two nights a week.

The 30p a week it cost each household was money well spent:

- Street drinking among young teenagers was reduced.
- Reported crimes fell by about 50 per cent.
- The number of gang fights in the neighbourhood dropped to 99 from 197 in the previous year.

More than 63 per cent of Reidvale's tenants told a University of Glasgow survey they feel safer since the scheme was introduced, and 92 per cent said promoting community safety should be the association's top priority. The decision to extend the scheme for 2005-2006 at a cost of £20,000 was backed by 96 per cent of the tenants.

An inner-city community based housing

association, Reidvale is run by a committee of tenants, and it was their concern about crime and anti-social behaviour that led to the community policing scheme. 'The association sees it as a long-term investment,' says Reidvale Director Rob Joiner. 'One of the aims of the project is to reconnect the police with local kids. Generally, we have the same specialist community police officers working with us. It is in their brief to provide a highly visible presence, and they have established good relationships on the street, even joining in football kickabouts with the kids. They also familiar faces at our sheltered schemes, which is very reassuring for older residents.'

Overall, says Joiner, the scheme cut the association's bill for dealing with vandalism by about £4,000 in its first year, but other cost benefits, like the rise in community confidence, cannot be priced. 'The survey shows that the police presence has made many people feel safer. In the longer-term we believe this will reduce our tenant turnover and the number of empty homes.'

The scheme has brought benefits for the police, 'It has changed the way they work,'



says Joiner. 'They have got to know everybody. They recognise the trademarks and the tags and have a much better

intelligence of the area, which helps their colleagues when they are called in to deal with serious crimes.'

The police are hired with the understanding they might be called away to deal with serious crime, but this happened only twice during the first year. More recently, local residents felt the value of the project in its absence when police resources in Glasgow were concentrated on providing security for the G8 summit at Gleneagles.

'We lost our police for six weeks, and all hell broke out for a while. We were very glad to get them back,' says Joiner.

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Housemaster Kees van Houdt monitors public areas on the Peperklip Estate, Rotterdam

CONCLUSIONS

BASED ON THE FINDINGS IN THIS REPORT

1

Architects, planners and developers should consider security as a key issue in the design of new homes and estates and the improvement of existing developments. Consultation should be held with housing organisations, the police, security experts and, where possible, future tenants at the design stage.

2

Social housing providers should employ modern technology – CCTV, door entry systems etc – to 'target harden' their estates.

3

Good housing management is a powerful antidote to anti-social behaviour. The case studies in this report suggest that it works best when it is estate-based and accessible to local people. Local knowledge and good relationships with customers are essential, if estates are to be safe and secure.

4

The French concierge system has travelled well across Europe and is particularly valuable in providing security and good management in blocks of flats.

5

Tenant incentive schemes can reduce the cost to housing providers of dealing with anti-social behaviour.

6

Adequate community facilities must be provided on all new housing estates and should be part of the regeneration of older schemes.

7

Employing staff from minority communities is important for community cohesion on estates with high numbers of migrants. Their work with young people is particularly important.

8

Social housing providers should introduce and support intervention programmes designed to prevent anti-social behaviour, especially among young people.

9

Working with communities and with tenants and their organisations is vitally important. Their views should inform any security improvement programmes.

10

Partnerships with other organisations, among them the police, local authorities, voluntary bodies and local businesses, are essential. Their work makes it possible to provide joint funding, avoid duplication, pool experiences and expertise and share information.

11

Where possible, agencies involved in making estates safe and secure should work from local estate-based offices with easy access for local people.

12

Highly visible neighbourhood policing is high on the wish-list of social housing tenants everywhere. Where this is not provided, social housing organisations should consider paying for private security or extra police cover. The examples in this report show this to be a cost-effective approach.

13

Social housing providers play a key role in preventing anti-social behaviour and dealing with its consequences. European governments should recognise their contribution and offer them further financial support to build on existing schemes, start new initiatives, support victims, organise youth and community activities, and promote local enterprise and employment.