

Mental Health and its Links to Crime and Antisocial Behaviour

Introduction

Anecdotally it is clear that mental health issues have a link to antisocial behaviour and crime in Gedling. People with mental health issues are more likely to be both victims and perpetrators of crime and particularly ASB in the Borough. Examples of the type of issues are when someone with a mental health issues becomes a victim of harassment from local youths as a consequence of their difference, or a hoarder becomes vulnerable due to the effect their hoarding activity has on their living conditions and the risk of fire, or on their neighbours. Deteriorating and debilitating mental health issues can change personalities making those affected more likely to be perpetrators, examples could include intermittent violent outbursts or changes to relationships with neighbours due to the onset of dementia. Similarly, anecdotal evidence suggests that many of those seeking health from the Council on homelessness and housing issues have mental health issues.

Data and evidence

There is a limited amount of hard data available, but it is clear from the cases dealt with in Gedling that it is a significant issue. A Home Office (2002) review of ASBOs found that for 60% of those issued an ASBO there was a mitigating factor such as mental distress, addiction, or learning disabilities. In 2007 the British Institute for Brain Injured Children (BIBIC) reported that 30% of young people who receive an ASBO have a diagnosed MH disorder or learning disability. In their 2014 report "Antisocial Behaviour and Mental Health" London Councils quote Hackney Council "Approximately 40% of our ASB cases at any one time have an element of mental health on one side or the other or sometimes both". GBCs housing options team state that mental health issues are self-reported by 60% of homeless applicants for housing.

Discussion

It is clear that mental health issues are the single greatest factor or cause in ASB within the borough. This has been recognised and a number of initiatives have been put in place, ranging from support, such as our work to make the borough dementia friendly, through to a mental health nurse been present in a response police car in Greater Nottingham at times of highest demand. In Gedling specifically our ASB and Vulnerable Persons Panel meets monthly to address issues relating to both perpetrators and victims. It is chaired by GBC and attended by the Police, Registered Social Landlords for example Gedling Homes, victim support and social care and particularly representation from Notts. County Council mental health

services who often take cases away. This was something That GBC initiated and has been adopted elsewhere as a model in the County.

There is significant work being carried out to address mental health and its consequences in the community with everybody from Neighbourhood Wardens through to Housing Officers and Contact Centre Staff dealing with issues every day, it may be appropriate for a more corporate approach to be adopted which would help support staff and partners in addressing the issue.

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