

Appendix A

Early intervention and tackling offending behaviour by under-10s

Interventions available

Acceptable behaviour contract (ABC)

An ABC (also known as an acceptable behaviour agreement) is an intervention designed to engage an individual in acknowledging his or her anti-social behaviour and its effect on others, with the aim of stopping that behaviour. An ABC is a written agreement made between a person who has been involved in anti-social behaviour and their local authority, youth inclusion support panel (YISP), landlord or the police. ABCs are not set out in law, which is why they are sometimes called agreements. Any agency is able to use and adapt the model. An ABC or acceptable behaviour agreement is completely flexible and can be adapted for the particular local need. It can include conditions that the parties agree to keep. It may also contain the agreed consequences of a breach of the agreement.

Parenting contracts (section 25 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Parenting contracts are voluntary written agreements between youth offending teams (YOTs) and the parent/guardian of a child/young person involved, or likely to be involved, in anti-social behaviour or criminal conduct. They are a two-sided arrangement where both the parents and the agency will play a part in improving the young person's behaviour. The contract contains a statement by the parent(s) agreeing to comply with the requirements for the period specified and a statement by the YOT agreeing to provide support to the parent(s) for the purpose of complying with those requirements. It is important that there is a clear agreement about the consequences if the terms of the parenting contract are not adhered to. If the contract is broken, the YOT may apply to the court for a parenting order (see below), which would include compulsory requirements.

Child safety order (sections 11–13 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended by section 60 of the Children Act 2004)

A child safety order (CSO) allows compulsory intervention with a child under 10 years of age who has committed an act which, had they been aged 10 or over, would have constituted an offence. It is designed to prevent anti-social behaviour when it is not possible to engage on a voluntary basis with a child under 10. A CSO is made in family proceedings in the magistrates' court on application by a local authority. The order places the child under the supervision of a responsible officer, who may be a local authority social worker or a member of a youth offending team and can include requirements designed to improve the child's behaviour and address underlying problems. If the order is not complied with, the parent can be made the subject of a parenting order if that would be in the interests of preventing repetition of the behaviour that led to the CSO being made.

Parenting order

A parenting order can be made in respect of a parent of a child under 10 years of age. It can require parents to attend a parenting programme (lasting up to three months) and specify requirements for the parent regarding supervision of the child (lasting up to 12 months). Failure to comply with a parenting order is a criminal offence punishable by a fine of up to £1,000 and/or a community sentence.

Under section 8 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as amended by the Children Act 2004, a parenting order can be imposed on a parent of a child who is subject to a CSO or when a CSO has been breached.

Section 26 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 enables YOTs to apply to the magistrates' court for a 'free-standing' parenting order. The court must be satisfied that the child or young person has engaged