

ASBO



You may have heard the term ASBO somewhere along the line fairly recently. What it stands for is an anti-social behaviour order. This covers pretty much everything that is bad with the world. You can receive one of these orders by committing an offence. What this punishment will entail will come later but first, in order to get one you would have to do something that applies to one of these categories:

- ▷ Street Scene
- ▷ Nuisance Neighbours
- ▷ Environmental Crime

Street scene

Street scene branches off into four other categories, the first of which is begging. This is quite simply requesting money from people you don't know, regularly. This is seen as both intimidating and not good for the areas that it occurs in.

The second category under street scene is anti-social drinking. So what makes drinking turn into anti-social drinking? The answer is rowdy behaviour and it's kind of like drunk and disorderly. The introduction of this is not surprising as apparently 61% of the population believe drink fuelled violence is increasing.

Next up are street prostitution and kerb crawling which are fairly self explanatory. You shouldn't sell sex, and you shouldn't go looking to buy sex (kerb crawling). The final one is the more obvious one, drugs; for taking, owning or dealing you can receive an ASBO of differing severity.

Nuisance neighbours

Nuisance neighbours is defined as, 'intimidation and harassment; noise, rowdy and nuisance behaviour; hoax calls; animal related problems and vehicle related nuisance.' The first thing I wanted to know was, what is

animal related problems? Basically it's noise and regular tearing up of your garden sort of thing. Probably the most relevant offence in this category is rowdy and nuisance behaviour. Rowdy behaviour is fighting, urinating on the streets, intimidating passers-by, criminal damage, shouting and swearing, and hooliganism. There you go; a clear and no nonsense definition of being a nuisance neighbour.

Environmental crime is one of those things you could well be committing without being aware you're doing anything wrong at all. Throwing rubbish on the ground is one of them I'm afraid. You can get an anti social behaviour order for, littering, nuisance vehicles, graffiti, drug related paraphernalia, fly posting, dog fouling, fly-tipping, dumped business waste, vandalism, abandoned shopping trolleys and noise nuisance.

Now as you're all anxious and hot under the collar about what this ASBO could do to you I shall explain why it's best not to get one. A passing policeman that catches you urinating in the street can, and probably will, give you an on the spot

fine of £40; fair enough in my opinion!

"Well I'll just refuse to pay it," you say. But should you refuse they will chase it up and charge you one and a half times the original amount. The on the spot fines seem to form the front line against low level crime, said to ease and free police time. I heard the Chief Superintendent of Kingston Police say that, in the past the police have not had the necessary powers in place to deal sufficiently with anti social behaviour. However now she is confident that they do, young offenders can be punished because there are tailor made punishments now available. Whatever your feelings on the introduction of anti social behaviour orders are, I anticipate them becoming a very big deal. They are there to protect victims of crime and if they prove effective in preventing it they will prove a permanent fixture in our communities.

As Michael Howard (Conservative Party Leader) has been saying, 'job' behaviour has grown out of control, and it's time for the perpetrators to feel intimidated. Anti-Social Behaviour Orders are a step towards making the case.