

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ON BUSES

Tom Lamplugh

Scottish Executive

Sue Granville and Diarmid Campbell-Jack

George Street Research

BACKGROUND

Dealing with crime and the effects of crime is one of the most important issues, both politically and socially, in Great Britain today. In particular, the media rarely misses a chance to highlight the issue, and research findings relating to crime tend to be among the most eagerly anticipated elements of social research. In amongst this noise is the awareness that there may be a gap between the way the public perceives crime, in terms of numbers and effect, and the actual experience of crime.

Although figures from the most recent Scottish Crime Survey (Scottish Executive, 2002) showed a decline between 1996 and 2000 from 44% to 28% in the proportion of those considering crime to be an extremely serious issue, it was still the second highest ranked issue out of all those listed. Drug abuse was seen as the most important issue, but compared with crime, unemployment, alcohol abuse and standards of health care, housing and education were all seen by fewer people as an extremely serious issue.

While crime as a whole is clearly a vital issue in the everyday lives of many Scots, it is necessary to recognise that there are many different constituent elements or actions that form crime and that these need to be examined separately and sensitively if an accurate picture is to be formed. Anti-social behaviour is one of these elements and as such should not solely be subsumed into larger-scale examinations of crime.

The political importance of examining anti-social behaviour has been made consciously explicit by the Scottish Executive. As the Minister for Communities stated in a recent consultation document focussing on the issue, "*anti-social behaviour by individuals, families or businesses and other bodies will not be ignored or tolerated any longer*". In particular, anti-social behaviour on public transport was identified within the consultation document as an area that "*consultees felt it was important that the Scottish Executive take steps to deal with*"¹ (Scottish Executive, 2003).

¹ Following on from this consultation the Anti-Social Behaviour (Scotland) Bill was passed in July 2004, aiming to make the legal framework for tackling the problem more effective, while also promoting positive social behaviour.

While public transport as a whole was mentioned within the consultation document, there are a number of reasons for specifically examining anti-social behaviour on public buses:

Firstly, there is the overall *prevalence of travel by bus*. According to recent UK-wide research (Department of Transport, 2004), the bus is the most common and frequently used mode of public transport by adults and young people with, across the UK, 46% of women and 40% of men using the bus at least three or four times a week. Scottish data suggests that bus usage is now increasing after a general decline from 1975 to 1998, with 445 million passenger journeys on local bus services in 2002-3, 1% more than in the previous year (Scottish Executive, 2004).

Secondly, there is the *financial impact* of anti-social behaviour on public bus companies. Reports suggest that each year bus companies spend millions of pounds repairing the damage done by vandals. For example, in Glasgow, First Bus group estimated the cost of malicious damage to its vehicles amounted to £1 million in one single year. (Transit Magazine, September 2002). The costs of repairing vandalised bus shelters and replacing damaged information displays also impacts upon Local Authority spending.

Thirdly, anti-social behaviour on buses is likely to have wider *social costs*. In recent years bus companies operating throughout Scotland have reported high levels of anti-social behaviour ranging from assaults, armed robbery and vandalism to verbal abuse and intimidating and threatening behaviour – all of these may impact significantly on the physical and mental well-being of passengers and drivers. In addition, in some areas the escalation of driver assault is serious threatening late night service operation. This has affected public opinion, with The Scottish Household Survey (Scottish Executive, 2003) showing that 20% of adults in Scotland (particularly females, the elderly and low earners) believe that it is unsafe to travel by bus in the evening.

As a result of the potential impact of anti-social behaviour on buses, there is a *need for detailed figures* on the issue. This is especially true as evidence suggests that some existing figures, whether from bus companies or from police figures, may understate the level of the problem. In the 2002 British crime survey (The Home Office, 2003), 80% of UK adult respondents said they did not report the last incident involving harassment, violence or physical assault they had experienced on public transport.

Since Scottish devolution, there has been a huge expansion in the amount of social research commissioned by the Scottish Executive. Within the Scottish Executive there are currently around 75 researchers working in 23 research teams, commissioning research to the value of over £5m and advising on the research contribution to the evidence base for social policy programmes and initiatives.

To enable issues relating to anti-social behaviour on buses to be explored in more depth, the Scottish Executive decided to commission research as part of its annual Transport Research Programme to investigate the extent and impact of anti-social behaviour on buses, and to propose ways to tackle the problem.

Specifically, the objectives of this research were to identify:

1. The extent of anti-social behaviour on Scottish buses and the perceived extent of anti-social behaviour on buses by members of the public
2. The types of anti-social behaviour that are most likely to occur on buses
3. The times at which, and places where, anti-social behaviour is most likely to occur
4. The effects of anti-social behaviour on drivers and driver recruitment
5. The types of people who are most likely to behave in an anti-social manner and those who are most likely to be affected by anti-social behaviour
6. The effect of anti-social behaviour on other passengers
7. The wider societal impact of anti-social behaviour on buses
8. Measures currently in place to tackle anti-social behaviour on buses and their relative impact
9. Successful ways of reducing anti-social behaviour on buses.

Following a competitive tendering process, George Street Research were appointed in late December 2003 to carry out this research.

HOW THE SURVEY WAS CARRIED OUT

A steering group was set up for this project, including representatives from the George Street Research project team and the Scottish Executive, a local council representative with experience of related issues and a representative from the Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT). This provided a firm knowledge-base from which to establish a flexible and accurate methodology.

In consultation with the steering group, the following structure for the project was drawn up that allowed all relevant groups to be interviewed:

- * Desk research
- * Paired/triad depth interviews with bus drivers
- * Depth interviews with bus company management staff
- * Quantitative in-home surveys of residents
- * Quantitative survey of bus drivers
- * Quantitative survey of bus company management staff
- * Depth interviews with key stakeholders

There are two main sets of quantitative in-home data referred to in this report. The first combines the results of two separate surveys (one with 12 – 15 year olds, the other with adults 16 or over) that took place in representative areas across Scotland. Results from this data help assess the actual experience of anti-social behaviour across the country. In total, 665 respondents were included in this data (overall target had been 670). This data is referred to throughout the paper as the *representative survey data*.

The second set of in-home data is the results of the *additional survey* which was designed to assess the level of experience in perceived problem areas. Interviews for this survey took place with anyone aged 16 or over in areas that had been selected primarily by bus company management staff as those thought to have particular problems with anti-social behaviour. The vast majority of these areas were urban areas – with specific locations and quotas being drawn up by the same sampling company. In total, 427 interviews were conducted (target of 400).

All the in-home surveys used the same questionnaire to ensure comparability across the studies, with considerable care taken with wording to ensure that all questions could be clearly understood by even the youngest respondents. The questionnaire was tested in approximately 60 pilot interviews conducted across Scotland in a mixture of urban and rural locations, thereby accounting for any potential difference in bus usage or experience of anti-social behaviour according to this variable. As a result of this pilot, a number of minor changes were made to the wording of certain questions while it was felt it was not necessary to further reduce questionnaire length.

Paired/depth interviews with bus drivers were set up through the bus company staff (using a list drawn up in consultation with the client), with bus company management staff being interviewed over the telephone later. In total, 24 drivers and 12 bus company management staff were interviewed qualitatively.

Bus company management were then sent a number of questionnaires to distribute to their staff. Included in this package was a questionnaire designed for bus company management themselves which they were asked to complete. At the end of the fieldwork period, 27 bus companies had responded (out of 83 contacted) and 174 bus drivers (out of 800).

The final stage was conducting a number of depth interviews with fifteen key stakeholders, some of whom had been identified as possible contacts during either the desk research or the qualitative interviews. Those interviewed included police officers with responsibility for buses/dealing with anti-social behaviour, bus company staff involved in relevant innovative projects, training providers and other relevant individuals such as individuals from voluntary organisations or municipal transport organisers.

As a whole, the study was designed to cover both public sectors (e.g. the general public and stakeholders such as the police and relevant voluntary organisation staff) and private sectors (primarily the bus company management staff). This recognised that both sectors had a key interest and stake in the issue itself although their perspectives differed. As a result, the bus company management staff questionnaire focussed primarily on questions concerning economic impact of anti-social behaviour or measures designed to deal with it, while interviews with relevant police staff emphasised more the wider social effects of the problem.

KEY ISSUES

A number of relevant issues were identified during the course of the project. These are noted in the following sections of the paper.

Issue One – Defining anti-social behaviour: the problems of ensuring that an intangible concept is defined correctly in a research context.

Drawing up a comprehensive definition of anti-social behaviour would serve three purposes:

- * Explain what anti-social behaviour refers to when we used the term in any questionnaire
- * Form the basis of a pre-coded list, for when respondents are asked to spontaneously state which types of activities on buses or at bus stops they perceive as being anti-social
- * Form the basis of a prompted list, for when respondents are asked which different types of anti-social behaviour they have actually experienced

Defining anti-social behaviour is a matter of some debate amongst experts in criminology and the law, necessitating managing different perceptions among experts of what constitutes anti-social behaviour. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 defined anti-social conduct (which includes speech) as those actions or behaviours that take place “in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household [as the defendant]”. Evidence suggests that Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England tend to use this definition of anti-social behaviour in their work.

An alternative definition was drawn up based on information in the Home Office review of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (London School of Economics and Political Science, 2003). This review noted seventeen different types of behaviour for which ASBOs had been granted:

Table 1: Alternative definition of anti-social behaviour

Harassment	Noise	Drunk and disorderly
Threats	Public disturbance	Prostitution
Verbal abuse	Harassing a specific person	Shoplifting
Intimidation	Arson	Throwing missiles
Graffiti and criminal damage	Racial harassment / abuse	Trespass
Assault	Criminal behaviour	

As noted in the same report, defining anti-social behaviour in this way was not wholly ideal as certain definitions lacked clarity in a practical context as they were not necessarily independent of the context in which they occurred (e.g. a certain level of noise may be acceptable in one area but not in another).

While we accepted that this definition was not beyond criticism, we felt that the overall approach of prompting respondents with concrete examples of anti-social behaviour was the correct one to take for this particular study. In particular, there was the concern that a totally subjective and open approach may end in results that reflected popular or media hype about anti-social behaviour rather than actual experience of specific behaviours.

A working definition of anti-social behaviour listing certain individual types of relevant behaviour was drawn up by the steering group. Although this was felt to be comprehensive, the definition was then tested in a more rigorous manner. Firstly, bus drivers and bus company management staff who were interviewed qualitatively were asked to discuss the types of behaviour they considered anti-social on buses or at bus stops. Secondly, care was taken in the pilot interviews to ensure that those answering the quantitative questionnaire were able to outline any 'other' options that they had not had the chance to mention, with the possibility that frequently mentioned answers could be added to the prompted list.

Following these two stages it was decided to include an 'other' option as part of the questionnaire not only when asking respondents what types of activity they perceived as anti-social but also when asking them to detail the types of anti-social behaviour they experienced. In this way respondents were given latitude to include *any* types of behaviour that they considered anti-social and did not fit in the existing definition. Thus while a completely subjective approach (i.e. not prompting respondents at all with elements of anti-social behaviour) had originally been rejected, a small element of this approach was incorporated within the question wording.

At the end of this process the following final definition of anti-social behaviour relating to buses and bus stops was approved:

“Anti-social behaviour is defined as behaviour that threatens the physical or mental health, safety or security of individuals or causes offence or annoyance to individuals.

For the purposes of this particular study this definition includes:

- * *harassment and intimidating behaviour that creates alarm or fear, towards bus drivers and / or other passengers, including verbal or physical abuse*
- * *drunken and abusive behaviour towards bus drivers and / or other passengers*
- * *assault of bus drivers and / or other passengers*
- * *vehicle crime such as vandalism, graffiti, throwing missiles or other deliberate damage to buses or bus company property*
- * *dumping litter or rubbish on buses*
- * *conflicts or racist abuse / incidents*
- * *engaging in threatening behaviour in large groups at bus stops or on buses*
- * *smoking of cigarettes or illegal drug taking on buses or at bus stops”*

This definition was included in all questionnaires (after any spontaneous questions concerning the definition of anti-social behaviour) to ensure that each respondent understood what types of behaviour were covered when the questionnaire mentioned anti-social behaviour. A shortened version was also used as the pre-coded list for the question asking respondents to define anti-social behaviour and as the prompted options when asking for experience of anti-social behaviour.

Perceptual and experiential approaches - introduction

In order to provide a rounded view of anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops in Scotland, it was necessary to ensure that two different aspects were covered – the experiential and the perceptual.

Firstly, both experiential and perceptual aspects were included in their own right as potentially independent variables.

The former, a detailed evaluation of actual experiences of anti-social behaviour, was clearly important as this would establish the prevalence and nature of different types of experience, feeding into a process that would develop ways of reducing these types of behaviour.

The latter was vital as it would provide an understanding of what people in Scotland understand by the phrase anti-social behaviour in relation to buses and bus stops. This could also be used to establish whether the public definition of the phrase is similar to that held by policy makers, thereby potentially establishing a foundation for communicating about the issue.

Secondly, these two elements were included as potentially inter-related variables. Respondents' experience of anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops may well impact upon their definition of anti-social behaviour, while whether an incident is considered to be anti-social may affect whether individual types of behaviour are tolerated or not.

In order to examine the two elements in a logical manner we examined each in turn, dealing firstly with the experiential.

The experiential approach

Experience of anti-social behaviour on buses and at bus stops across Scotland was quantified using results from the representative survey, with respondents being asked, from a prompted list, which types of anti-social behaviour they had experienced.

Results showed that a majority (70%) of those who had ever travelled by bus had experienced some form of anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops. Forty percent of respondents had experienced rudeness/verbal abuse, with slightly fewer having experienced drunken behaviour (39%), dumping litter or rubbish (39%) and smoking cigarettes on buses (37%). The least mentioned types of anti-social behaviour were physical assault of passengers (9%), taking illegal drugs (8%) and physical assault of drivers (3%).

Just over a quarter (26%) of those using a bus in the preceding four weeks had experienced anti-social behaviour on a bus or at a bus stop during that period. The only types of anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops experienced within the preceding four weeks by more than 5% of the representative sample were rudeness/verbal abuse, drunken behaviour, dumping litter/rubbish (all 9%) and smoking cigarettes on buses (8%).

Table 2: Experience of anti-social behaviour

	Representative sample	
	Ever	Last 4 weeks
	%	%
Being rude/verbal abuse	40	9
Drunken behaviour	39	9
Dumping litter/rubbish	39	8
Smoking cigarettes on buses	37	8
Throwing objects at bus	28	5
Graffiti	23	3
Threatening behaviour in large groups at bus stops	21	3
Throwing object in bus	15	3
Deliberate damage to bus (not graffiti)	14	2
Physical assault of passengers	9	2
Taking illegal drugs	8	2
Physical assault of drivers	3	*
None	30	74
Base: (All use public bus/use in last 4 weeks)	(498)	(354)

A number of hypotheses regarding the relative experience of anti-social behaviour by various sub-group are dealt with below:

Hypothesis 1 – anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops is experienced more by respondents of a certain age

Perceptions of the relationship between age and experience of anti-social behaviour on buses and at bus stops are complex. Many assume that older respondents may be more likely to be the victims of anti-social behaviour or, at least, may be more affected by it, while others assume that young people are more likely to be the perpetrators.

Among those who had ever travelled on a bus, younger respondents were more likely to have ever experienced anti-social behaviour on a bus or at a bus stop than older respondents. Approximately three-quarters of those aged 12-18 (76%), 19-24 (76%) and 25-39 (77%) years claimed to have ever experienced at least one type of anti-social behaviour on a bus or at a bus stop, compared to only 59% of those aged 60 or over.

The relatively lower experience of anti-social behaviour among those aged 60 or over was not simply due to this age group using the bus less. Indeed, amongst all those who ever used the bus, those aged over 60 were more likely to travel on it at least once a week than the average respondent (60% compared to 54%).

Table 3: Experience of anti-social behaviour by age

	Representative survey					
	Total	12-18	19-24	25-39	40-59	60+
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Experienced anti-social behaviour	70%	76%	76%	77%	70%	59%
Base: (ever travelled by bus)	(498)	(73)	(37)	(120)	(128)	(140)

While the data shows that older respondents tended to have lower actual experience of anti-social behaviour, to gain a full picture of the relationship between anti-social behaviour on buses and age, all respondents were asked to state the age groups that they felt were most affected by anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops.

While over 60s were relatively unlikely to have experienced anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops they were the age group most respondents felt were most affected by it. Exactly three-quarters of respondents across Scotland perceived those aged 60 or over to be the age-group most affected by anti-social behaviour (ranging from 60% of 12-18 year olds saying this to 80% of 40-59 year olds), a considerably higher proportion than mentioned any other age group.

Table 4: Age-groups felt to be most affected by anti-social behaviour

	Representative survey
	%
Under 12	24
12-15	21
16-18	20
19-24	14
25-39	16
40-59	29
60 and over	75
Base: (Total sample)	(665)

Hypothesis 2 – anti-social behaviour on buses is experienced more by males than by females

There is a widespread perception that males tend to be both the victims and perpetrators of crime more than females. For example, the Scottish Crime Survey (Scottish Executive, 2002) reports that males are one of the groups most at risk from violent crime, although evidence from the same survey suggests that victims of certain types of crime are more likely to be female and that females are more likely to be worried that they, or someone they live with, may become a victim of crime.

Experience of anti-social behaviour was slightly higher among males (73%) who had ever travelled by bus than among females (67%) although this was not a statistically significant difference. This was not likely to be due to higher frequency of travel among males, with only 52% of males who ever travelled by bus travelling once a week or more compared to 56% of females. No significant differences were seen between sex in terms of experience of individual types of anti-social behaviour, although males were directionally more likely than females to have experienced drunken behaviour (45% vs. 34%), smoking cigarettes on buses (43% vs. 33%) and graffiti (28% vs. 20%).

Results from elsewhere showed that respondents' perception of the types of people affected by anti-social behaviour on buses largely matched the reality shown above. Most respondents felt that males and females were equally affected (60%), although almost a quarter (24%) felt that it would be mainly females who were affected.

Table 5: Gender felt to be most affected by anti-social behaviour

	Representative survey
	%
All males	*
Mainly males	9
Males and females equally	60
Mainly females	24
All females	3
Don't know/Can't remember	5
Base: (Total sample)	(665)

Hypothesis 3 – anti-social behaviour on buses is experienced more in urban areas

When asked to select the areas where they felt there was a particular problem with anti-social behaviour, almost all of those selected by bus company management staff were within heavily built up urban areas. This backed up the general perception among bus drivers and bus company staff in qualitative interviews that the major “problem areas” were almost exclusively urban. As a result, it was necessary to examine the relative experience of respondents who lived in urban as opposed to rural areas vis-à-vis anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops.

Analysis showed that the hypothesis could not be fully substantiated on the basis of our data. Results showed that a smaller proportion of rural respondents (62%) who had ever travelled by bus than urban respondents (71%) had ever experienced anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops, but this difference was only directional and not significant². This was despite the directionally greater proportions of those who ever used the bus in urban areas who used the bus at least once a week (56% compared to 39% in rural areas). Likewise, urban respondents were directionally (but not significantly) more likely to have experienced rudeness, drunken behaviour, objects being thrown at the bus, physical assault of passengers and illegal drug taking on buses than their rural counterparts.

² Even at a 90% confidence interval

Examination of experience of anti-social behaviour among those travelling by bus in the last four weeks showed no difference between urban and rural areas. In total, 26% of each group having experienced at least one form of anti-social behaviour in this period.

Hypotheses 4 – anti-social behaviour on buses would be higher in the additional survey areas

Results for the representative survey were compared with those from the additional survey (the survey conducted solely in areas where there was perceived to be a greater problem with anti-social behaviour on buses)³. As noted earlier, these were largely urban areas, with most additionally areas having relatively high rates of deprivation.

These results showed that there was a difference in the proportions in each sample stating they had experienced at least one form of anti-social behaviour, as shown in the table below. Out of those ever using the bus, 78% in the additional survey compared to 69% in the representative survey had experienced anti-social behaviour, with a similar ratio apparent among those travelling in the last four weeks were examined (33% for additional sample having experienced anti-social behaviour compared to 23% for the representative sample). To allow comparability between the representative and additional samples for this particular question, the representative survey results are based solely on those aged 16 or above.

Table 6: Experience of anti-social behaviour in representative and additional surveys

	Representative survey		Additional survey	
	Ever %	Last 4 %	Ever %	Last 4 %
Experienced any type of anti-social behaviour	69	23	78	33
<i>Base: Travelled by bus ever/last 4 weeks</i>	(437)	(328)	(354)	(276)

There was one other notable difference between the two samples, with a higher proportions of respondents in the additional survey (38%) than the representative sample (27%) claiming to have ever experienced objects being thrown at buses than their counterparts in the representative survey. It is worth noting that bus drivers interviewed qualitatively often referred to objects being thrown at the bus as a particular concern as an object hitting the windscreen (as occasionally happened) could have potentially fatal consequences.

³ The results for the representative sample have been recalculated to exclude the 12-15 year old age group, thus enabling comparison to the additional sample.

The perceptual approach

As we were interested in the immediate cognitive links made with the phrase 'anti-social behaviour', it was decided that a spontaneous, rather than prompted, question would be most suitable. As a result, the following question was asked of each interviewee, with responses entered into a precoded list based upon the definition of anti-social behaviour established earlier:

"Thinking about the types of behaviour you could experience when on a bus or waiting at a bus stop, what ones would you describe as 'anti-social'?"

Rudeness or verbal abuse was the type of behaviour described as anti-social behaviour by the greatest proportion of respondents (66%) with around two in five mentioning drunken behaviour (45%). Other types of anti-social behaviour referred to spontaneously by around one in four or more respondents were smoking cigarettes on buses, physical assault of drivers, threatening behaviour in large groups at bus stops, dumping litter or rubbish, physical assault of passengers, throwing objects at a bus, deliberate damage to buses (not graffiti) and graffiti itself. Throwing objects at the bus and taking illegal drugs were the types of activity least mentioned spontaneously as anti-social in connection with buses and bus stops.

Table 7: Types of behaviour described as anti-social

	Representative survey
	%
Being rude/verbal abuse	66
Drunken behaviour	45
Smoking cigarettes on buses	33
Physical assault of drivers	32
Threatening behaviour in large groups at bus stops	28
Dumping litter/rubbish	28
Physical assault of passengers	27
Throwing objects at bus	25
Deliberate damage to bus (not graffiti)	25
Graffiti	24
Throwing object in bus	17
Taking illegal drugs	16
Other	13
Don't know	5
Base: (total sample)	(665)

A number of different hypotheses were examined to understand the reasons for this perception of what constituted anti-social behaviour.

Hypothesis 1 – the most serious types of anti-social behaviour were those most associated with the phrase "anti-social behaviour"

The first hypothesis was that when asked what they felt constituted anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops, respondents would be most likely to mention those types of behaviour that they felt were most “anti-social” and likely to have the most significant negative impact.

A basic examination of the types of anti-social behaviour experienced shows that this is unlikely to be the case, with the three types of behaviour most associated with anti-social behaviour by respondents’ rudeness (66%), drunken behaviour (45%) and smoking cigarettes (33%)⁴.

This was backed up by findings from the qualitative discussions with bus drivers. Most drivers were willing and able to categorise anti-social behaviour into two different typologies: the more and less serious. The former generally included all forms of violence against bus drivers themselves or their passengers, while the latter included what were perceived as non-violent behaviours such as verbal abuse, smoking or littering on buses. While the more violent types of behaviour were not among the least associated with anti-social behaviour, neither were they among the most associated suggesting no outright link between the two variables. This hypothesis could therefore be rejected.

Hypothesis 2 – the types of anti-social behaviour that needed to be dealt with as priorities were those most associated with the phrase “anti-social behaviour”

The second hypothesis was that the activities most perceived as “anti-social” would be those that respondents felt needed to be dealt with most urgently. This hypothesis differed from the previous one concerning the most serious types of anti-social behaviour, as it is possible that respondents consider the most serious types, i.e. those that could cause the most damage, to happen so infrequently that dealing with other types of behaviour should be prioritised.

In order to establish the types of anti-social behaviour that interviewees felt should be dealt with as priorities, all respondents were asked the following question:

“I am now going to show you the same list of different types of anti-social behaviour that you may or may not have experienced and I would like you to tell me which of these you think are the four biggest priorities to deal with.”

Results to this question showed that the main priorities were physical assault of drivers (61%) or passengers (51%), with rudeness/verbal abuse (50%) the only other option felt to be one of the four biggest priorities by at least half the sample. Drunken behaviour (45%) was the only other option mentioned by more than a third of the survey.

Clearly there is a considerable connection between the types of behaviour respondents associate with anti-social behaviour and those they feel should be dealt with as priorities, with four of the five types of behaviour most associated with anti-social behaviour ranked in the top five priorities interviewees feel should be dealt with.

⁴ Although this is not to minimise the extent to which these types of behaviour may have affected the victims

Table 8: Types of anti-social behaviour seen as priority to deal with

	Representative survey
	%
Physical assault of drivers	61
Physical assault of passengers	51
Being rude/verbal abuse	50
Drunken behaviour	45
Threatening behaviour in large groups at bus stops	32
Throwing objects at bus	26
Deliberate damage to bus (not graffiti)	22
Smoking cigarettes on buses	18
Dumping litter/rubbish	16
Taking illegal drugs	16
Graffiti	11
Throwing objects in bus	7
None of the above	2
Don't know	*
Base: (total sample)	(665)

Hypothesis 3 – the types of anti-social behaviour that were experienced most were those most associated with the phrase “anti-social behaviour”

Examining this issue necessitated comparing directly the results for the two relevant questions to see if the types of anti-social behaviour that respondents had actually experienced matched those they associated with anti-social behaviour.

Comparing the results for the two questions shows that respondents' perception of anti-social behaviour matches to an extent the types of behaviour that they have actually experienced. The types of activity most connected with the phrase “anti-social behaviour” in relation to buses and bus stops were three of the four most experienced, namely, being rude/verbal abuse (40%), drunken behaviour (39%) and smoking cigarettes on buses (37%). The major differences were the high proportion perceiving physical assault of drivers (32%) as anti-social relative to the low numbers having ever seen it (3%) and the fact that dumping litter/rubbish was the second most experienced type of anti-social behaviour on buses but was not among the most associated with anti-social behaviour.

Table 9: Types of anti-social behaviour seen as “anti-social” and ever experienced

	Representative survey	
	Perceived as “anti-social”	Ever experienced
	%	%
Being rude/verbal abuse	66	40
Drunken behaviour	45	39
Smoking cigarettes on buses	33	37
Physical assault of drivers	32	3
Threatening behaviour in large groups at bus stops	28	21
Dumping litter/rubbish	28	39
Physical assault of passengers	27	9
Throwing objects at bus	25	28
Deliberate damage to bus (not graffiti)	25	14
Graffiti	24	23
Throwing object in bus	17	15
Taking illegal drugs	16	8
Other	13	*
Don't know	5	*
None	5	30
Base: (total sample/ever used a bus)	(665)	(498)

Issue two – assessing economic impact, taking account of both tangibles and intangibles and potential gaps in private sector information.

One of the secondary aims of the study was to try and quantify the different levels and types of expenditure made by bus companies relating to anti-social behaviour. This information could then be used to contextualise the other research findings, identify any gaps in information held by bus companies and establish the rough impact of anti-social behaviour in financial terms.

A list of possible areas of relevant expenditure to be used in the bus company management staff questionnaires was drawn up. This list was based largely on information accessed during the desk research supplemented by information provided by steering group members. In addition, bus company management staff were asked during qualitative depth interviews whether they would be able to provide relevant information and whether there were any additional areas of expenditure that could be included in the afore-mentioned list.

While few extra areas of expenditure were identified, evidence suggested that it was difficult, if not impossible, for certain companies to provide detailed financial information on certain types of expenditure – with this being a key finding in itself.

As a result, the quantitative questionnaire contained instructions that, if necessary, the questions dealing with expenditure should be passed to the individual most likely to be able to provide information and that a rough estimate should be provided if it was impossible to provide an accurate figure. Respondents were also asked to ensure that an answer was provided wherever possible.

Data from the relevant questions on the quantitative questionnaire was, as expected, incomplete. While respondents were able to provide figures for certain elements of expenditure at the bus company they worked for, such as bus repairs and increased cleaning costs due to anti-social behaviour, it was not as easy for them to calculate expenditure on other less tangible elements. Few respondents, for example, were able to state how much they spent on any extra wages they had to spend to recruit staff due to the perceived problems of anti-social behaviour or the extra costs associated with having staff off work due to experiencing anti-social behaviour. Similar problems were seen with regards to other, less “tangible” or easily calculable elements of expenditure.

While the lack of data meant a detailed overall cost of the effect of anti-social behaviour could not be provided, it did highlight the extent to which bus companies were unable to quantify the effect of anti-social behaviour in financial terms. Without this precise quantifiable financial information it would be difficult to establish overall strategies for dealing with the problem or assess the likely cost-effectiveness of various individual measures (e.g. anti-graffiti paint or CCTV cameras on buses). As a result, one recommendation of the study was for bus companies to maintain detailed financial information.

Issue three – handling sensitive issues with individuals who may have been severely affected by anti-social behaviour.

A small number of drivers interviewed during the course of the research had personal experience of relatively traumatic types of anti-social behaviour in the course of their work. Understanding the experiences and emotions of these drivers was an important element of the research as it would allow for a more detailed evaluation of the ways in which serious incidents of anti-social behaviour are dealt with and allow an assessment of the effects of the most serious incidents.

Those respondents who had undergone severe and often frightening examples of anti-social behaviour in the course of their work needed to be handled carefully within any paired or triad depth.

The first practical issue was recognising that, as paired or triad depths were being conducted, the dynamics would be very different to those of a straightforward depth interview, where a different approach may have been taken to these incidents.

The second issue was ensuring that participants were clear that, although the interviews had been arranged with the permission and active support of bus management staff, that the interview was not being conducted on behalf of the bus companies or the police and that the interviewer was strictly neutral. This gave drivers who had experienced severe anti-social incidents in the course of their work the freedom to be honest about their feelings regarding how the bus company management or police reacted to their incidents.

It was not intended that interviewers act as counsellors during these interviews (although it may have been relevant had certain information or situations arisen in the course of any interview session). This was primarily as there was an implicit danger that drivers may either subconsciously exaggerate their situation to gain the sympathy of the listener or, conversely, to the researcher being seen as a professional who is 'examining their case'.

However, this had to be balanced with a need to ensure that drivers were supported within the interviews, with the use of paired and triad interviews assisting this process. Firstly, this structure allowed a sense of companionship that would not have been present in depth interviews with one respondent. Secondly, drivers who had experienced severe types of anti-social behaviour were likely to feel supported as other participants were likely to sympathise with their experience and perhaps know well another driver who had similar experiences. Drivers' basic psychological needs of affiliation and support were therefore met through the dynamics of the group itself.

A number of steps were taken by qualitative interviews to establish a working relationship with the drivers for the course of the interview, while avoiding moving into a more direct counselling-style role. These included an emphasis on:

- * comprehension of the structural position of the drivers in the bus company hierarchy and the possible effects this may have.
- * a sensitive approach to acknowledging the difficulties they may have faced (without going so far as to "identify" directly with the driver). This involved, in part, the use of what Berne called "strokes" (Chrzanowska, 2002) to provide social support (while maintaining a critical distance), thereby helping affirm that it was acceptable for the driver to give their opinions.
- * careful consideration of both tone and language (particularly in any introduction) to ensure the interviewer is not identified as analogous to bus company management.

As a result, the actual opinions of drivers were accessed to the extent that drivers opened up about their feelings and, occasionally, the resentment they felt about incidents of anti-social behaviour and lack of systemic support. On at least one occasion, this was explicitly tied into an admission that drivers themselves feel obliged to act outwith the official system:

"If you contact the police it just involves a hell of a lot of paperwork and at the end of the day it does nothing. It is, it's, probably things that should be reported and you think, huh, it doesn't have to be".

A similar opinion of the lack of support in their work was apparent in the view of one driver who stated that *"we haven't got any option"* when asked whether they were okay with the absence of safety screens on their buses.

Issue four – ensuring qualitative results are fully representative and reconciling different viewpoints.

It was important to ensure that the qualitative results reflected the viewpoints of drivers as a whole. This was important as drivers who had experienced severe types of anti-social behaviour may have been more likely to assume that these incidents happened regularly (thereby creating the need to reconcile their perceived frequency and severity of incidents with those of other drivers) or may have had unrepresentative attitudes or opinions as a result.

As a result, respondents were asked during the course of the interviews the extent to which their feelings and experiences were shared by other drivers. This established that those drivers who had been severely affected by anti-social behaviour were willing to accept that their experiences were out of the ordinary. Most drivers interviewed also felt that drivers in other areas of Scotland would have to put up with worse behaviour, with repeated suggestions that Glasgow would be the worst place to drive a bus with regards to anti-social behaviour.

Discussions also focussed upon how drivers deal with any incident of anti-social behaviour on a bus they were driving. Wherever possible, drivers were either asked to comment on how they generally dealt with incidents or to role-play a hypothetical incident rather than to describe actual events (although these were discussed if mentioned by participants). This helped maintain a non-judgemental attitude, so that drivers not feeling that their actions were being scrutinised and potentially faulted either by the interviewer or colleagues.

Again, these discussions highlighted that some drivers on occasion did not always handle incidents according to the rule book:

“I am a pretty big bloke and most people wouldn’t argue with me. I won’t put up with any nonsense on my bus and I’m quite happy to throw someone off if they are smoking or causing damage But if I was a much smaller bloke, I think I might feel much more threatened by a passenger on the bus. I suppose you could say that I am aggressive back to them and sometimes that might make it worse....”

OUTCOMES – TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

As a result of the importance of the anti-social behaviour and its prevalence, providing concrete suggestions as to how to reduce anti-social behaviour on buses or at bus stops was clearly of vital importance.

A number of questions were asked in all qualitative and quantitative elements of the study to examine these issues in more depth. The three main areas of importance highlighted by this process are briefly considered in the following sections of this paper:

Increased and improved training provisions

Maximising the quality and quantity of training given to bus drivers was felt to be a part of reducing anti-social behaviour for the following reasons:

- * While quantitative data suggested most anti-social behaviour experienced by drivers was relatively minor, such as rudeness and verbal abuse, drivers acknowledged qualitatively that these incidents could be aggravated by their response. Some bus drivers admitted that they meet aggression head on, thus potentially exacerbating the situation.
- * Over a quarter of drivers claimed to have had no training at all on anti-social behaviour, with less than half saying they received any sort of formal training. In particular, drivers lacked training specifically in dealing with conflict management and conflict resolution (some stakeholders suggested this training would be particularly effective) and were unaware of how to deal with many incidents of anti-social behaviour in an effective manner.
- * The involvement of police in training was seen as a means of helping improve relationships between drivers and the police by creating realistic expectations of police reactions to incidents and ensuring drivers knew the information they needed to provide to police if an incident occurred.

In order to ensure that a coherent approach was taken across the bus industry, it was recommended that a guide to best training be developed and provided to bus operators, providing guidance on the types of training that may be suitable and details on ways to introduce courses.

Initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour

The possible initiatives that could be used to tackle anti-social behaviour are dealt with below, split into two groups: diversionary approaches (e.g. sponsoring local football teams or educational approaches) and more tangible or direct initiatives such as physical installations on the bus (e.g. CCTV cameras).

Diversionary approaches

Qualitative discussions suggested that stakeholders felt the most effective initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour in the longer term were likely to be those of an educational and preventative nature that involved a variety of organisations. For example, citizenship lessons for school pupils reinforced by visits either from bus company staff or the police to explain the impact of anti-social behaviour.

While bus drivers tended to prefer more direct approaches to dealing with anti-social behaviour, due to the difficulties with anti-social behaviour on the school run, educational approaches such as visiting schools were seen as important. The introduction of pupil agreements / pupil charters, pupil ID cards, the involvement of parents and greater involvement on the part of teaching staff were also seen as useful elements of managing anti-social behaviour on the school run.

Direct initiatives

A range of direct initiatives were particularly favoured by bus drivers. While the majority were very keen on safety screens, there was a minority who felt that they would prefer to have the opportunity of having more direct contact with the public. CCTV cameras were also felt to be particularly effective, especially if passengers were made aware that there were cameras on the bus and that they could be prosecuted as a result of the footage. Panic alarms were also felt to be relatively effective, although these depended upon a quick reaction from the police, as were spit kits (due to the prevalence of spitting at drivers on buses), although drivers tended to be less positive towards anti-graffiti paint.

Reconciling different perceptions

As noted above, bus drivers tended to think direct approaches were most effective, while stakeholders were more likely to recognise the value in diversionary approaches. Clearly while both these views are valuable in themselves there is a need to examine these overall perceptions in more depth.

Firstly, the different perspectives of both groups are important. The primary concern of bus drivers is their physical and mental well-being in the short-term, with this tending to lead to a focus on immediate improvements such as introducing safety screens. Due to their day to day job, drivers were the most likely of any group to have experience of different direct non-diversionary approaches and to be able to assess which of these were most practical. Stakeholders tended to have a broader perspective, with police officers concerned about crime rates in general and certain other stakeholders having a general concern about introducing long-term societal change.

Secondly, as would be expected, ideological concerns led to a different focus. This was particularly true of the minority of drivers and company staff who perceived that some diversionary measures were an expensive means of tackling anti-social behaviour without generally being able to point to any conclusive evidence to this effect. These respondents were especially concerned about the morality of certain diversionary approaches “rewarding” perpetrators for their actions. This view was not shared by the police officers we spoke to with responsibility for anti-social behaviour on buses, who tended to be appreciative of diversionary approaches while also accepting that they had a responsibility to catch criminals.

The results of the research therefore suggested both that there was a lack of detailed information on the actual effectiveness of different approaches and also that measures that led drivers to assume diversionary approaches would be less effective. As a result, on-going assessment of the actual efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the different possible initiatives was necessary to supplement the figures on perception of efficiency provided by this study.

However, the research also suggested that there were concrete initiatives that could be introduced that would be likely to lead to greater confidence among bus drivers, such as effective CCTV cameras and safety screens. Given the importance of maintaining confident employees (in terms of lower turnover of staff) this was an important finding in itself.

Partnerships and organisational approaches to dealing with anti-social behaviour

Across all audiences participating in this research, the data pointed to a need for increased partnership working across a variety of organisations, including the Scottish Executive, local councils, bus operators, police forces and community groupings. This was primarily as anti-social behaviour was perceived to impact across many areas of life and not solely to be an issue for bus companies. In addition, data from the bus company management staff survey showed that only 15% felt bus companies should be the lead organisation in dealing with preventing anti-social behaviour on buses, with the Scottish Executive (52%), the police (41%) and local councils (22%) all being more frequently mentioned.

Information from qualitative interviews suggested that a co-ordinated approach is already happening in certain areas, with active co-ordination between bus operators, the police and councils, although this was not the case across Scotland as a whole.

The research also highlighted that these organisations take definitive steps to help reduce anti-social behaviour, with these generally focussing on legal or policing matters.

Most respondents noted the importance of prosecuting perpetrators of anti-social behaviour and this was perceived to be an effective deterrent, both in the short term and longer term, among drivers and the general public. Over half (52%) of bus drivers agreed strongly that increasing the number of prosecutions would help deter others from committing anti-social behaviour, with 45% of in-home respondents agreeing strongly that the law was too lenient on people who were anti-social on buses on at bus stops.

While there was an appreciation from most respondents that there are many demands on police time, there were a number of suggestions as to ways in which the police could become more involved in tackling anti-social behaviour.

- * There were calls for a focus on certain known “hotspots” to be targeted by police for a specified amount of time and there were suggestions that this has been effective in a number of areas in London where this approach has been adopted.
- * A dedicated police officer working alongside a bus operator and local council was seen as a cost effective means in the longer term in helping to ensure that initiatives are prioritised and targeted.
- * Improved police response to acts of anti-social behaviour when they were committed, were seen to reinforce the seriousness of the issue and help to deter similar acts in the future.

As a result, it was recommended that attention be paid to improving co-ordination between bus operators, the police and councils. In addition, it was felt that efforts should be made to ensure that bus drivers and bus company management staff feel adequately protected, both in terms of introducing effective initiatives (as noted earlier) and the legal system.

Results therefore suggested that the dichotomy of private versus public needed to be overcome, in this issue at least, as a means of enabling both private and public stakeholders to find an effective means of dealing concretely with the issue. This was not due necessarily to any ideological perspective on the nature of private or public sectors, but to the efficiency of this way of working and the need to involve all relevant parties in working discussion. Indeed, it is notable that this type of co-ordination was generally welcomed in theory and in practise (by those who had experienced it) by stakeholders and bus company management staff we interviewed qualitatively.

WHY THIS RESEARCH IS IMPORTANT

The research has proved to be extremely useful in highlighting the extent of Anti-social behaviour on Scottish buses and its impact. The Scottish Executive, Local Authorities, Bus companies and the police are currently considering their response to the research recommendations.

The Scottish Executive currently supports Scottish bus companies through the provision of Bus Service Operators Grant, subsidised local bus service and the bus Route Development Grant. The Scottish Executive also supports the use of CCTV on Scottish Buses and the Public Transport Fund has recently supported the installation of CCTV cameras on all buses in Dundee as part of the City Councils Smart Bus project. There is also a forthcoming trial of CCTV in Glasgow on 100 buses operated by First Group. The Scottish Executive is currently considering the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBOs) as a measure to tackle some of the anti-social behaviour problems on buses.

The research highlighted the need for close interagency working to implement a range of different initiatives encompassing, physical, preventative and diversionary approaches. The Scottish Executive will continue to work closely with organisations across Scotland to tackle anti-social behaviour on buses.

REFERENCES

Chrzanowska, J. (2002) *Interviewing Groups and Individuals in Qualitative Market Research*. Sage, London.

Department of Transport. (2004). *People's Perception of Personal Security and Their Concerns about Crime on Public Transport*

London School of Economics and Political Science. (2003). *The Economic and Social Costs of Anti-social Behaviour: A Review*.

Scottish Executive. (2002). *The 2000 Scottish Crime Survey: Overview Report*.

Scottish Executive. (2003). *Scotland's People: Results from the 2003 Scottish Household Survey*

Scottish Executive. (2004). *Scottish Transport Statistics No 23: 2004 Edition*

The Home Office. (2003). *The British Crime Survey 2002/3*

Transit Magazine, *September* (2002), Landor Publishing, London