Antisocial or vulnerable tenants?: The experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB in social housing

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Business and Society

September 2021

Abstract

Antisocial behaviour (ASB) was introduced into policy in the 1996 Housing Act to intervene in 'nuisance' behaviour. Whilst ASB received academic scrutiny in the immediate years after its introduction into policy, less research has been conducted with alleged perpetrators of ASB in the context of social housing, a key arena which has faced repeated funding cuts. This research utilises qualitative, longitudinal interviews with alleged perpetrators of ASB within social housing, alongside contextual interviews with Key Informants from stakeholder organisations to explore how ASB is defined, ASB interventions perceived and experienced and the impact of ASB interventions on alleged perpetrators using the conceptual lens of vulnerability,

Key findings suggest the definition of ASB is unclear (an issue well-established in previous research), leading to problems in practice. The focus on social tenants means the behaviour of residents of other tenures is not subject to the same scrutiny or intervention and it appears the most vulnerable are the most likely to receive allegations of ASB and to face barriers in disputing reports. ASB interventions are perceived and experienced as disempowering. Tenants are generally not informed about the progress of the complaint, contributing to negative impacts on mental health and ontological security. Whilst there was evidence of behaviour change within the sample, tenants reported, for the most part, negative, unintended behaviour change, a lack of change or intermittent change rather than any sustained, required behaviour change without unintended consequences. There was little evidence of support being offered to tenants, despite all tenants reporting (often multiple) vulnerabilities, alongside evidence that vulnerability can be exacerbated by interventions themselves, especially related to ontological security, mental health and domestic abuse. Overall, findings suggest vulnerability and support is side-lined in favour of disempowering, punitive interventions that have a negative impact on tenants.

Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work is a resubmission from work submitted to this University in September 2021 and has otherwise not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

The author has published one journal article and one news article from this thesis which includes some of the work presented here:

Cameron, K. (2022). Antisocial behaviour or just unmet support needs?: How intervening in nuisance behaviour impacts underlying vulnerabilities. *AMPS Cities in a Changing World*, 24 (1), 18 – 26.

Cameron, K. (2023). What is antisocial behaviour?: According to my research, no one really knows. *The Conversation.* [Online]. 28 March 2023. Available at: https://theconversation.com/what-is-antisocial-behaviour-according-to-my-research-no-one-really-knows-202690 [Accessed 5 April 2023].

Acknowledgements

I have benefited from the advice and support of a wonderful and knowledgeable supervisory team throughout the making of this thesis. I would like to thank Dr. Kate Brown for her unwavering encouragement and support from the day she first suggested she could be my PhD supervisor to now, at the point of submitting my PhD. She has been a positive, passionate and inspiring person to have in my corner. I am also grateful for the support, knowledge and advice of Professor Peter Dwyer, whose supervision has encouraged me to continuously improve and strive to make the best work I can. I am honoured to be one of the last supervisees before he retires; I hope it has been as positive an experience for him as it has been for me. I would also like to thank my Thesis Advisor Sharon Grace for her comments, advice and support throughout my PhD, as well as the wider Social Policy and Social Work department at the University of York. In addition, I would like to thank my examiners Aniela Wenham and Sadie Parr whose feedback has led to an improved, more coherent thesis as a whole.

This research could not have been conducted without the stakeholder organisations and Key Informants who took part in the research, provided access to tenants and took interest in the research process and findings. Their willingness to share their experiences (and office spaces!) has been incredibly helpful and important when working through the fieldwork. I would like to offer particular thanks to the tenant participants who took part in this project and shared moving and personal accounts of their experiences of antisocial behaviour and the related interventions for very little personal gain. Individually, they allowed access into their own lives at a time when things were often very turbulent for them and together, I hope I have given justice to their voices, experiences, perspectives and time which they gave to this project and to me.

The support of the postgraduate community has been invaluable to helping me complete this thesis. Especial thanks are due to Susan Watson and Amy Holmes who, from our MA to now, have been such close and considerate friends, always available for a hot drink and a chat, always seem to know how I'm feeling and who continue to make me proud to be going through this process with them by my side. Additionally, I am very grateful to the York Law School PhD community who invited

me to take part in their postgraduate events which have helped to keep me sane throughout the Covid pandemic. Thank you!

I am grateful to the listening ear of my mum, Liz Toone, who has been on the other end of the phone for the 8 years I have spent in Higher Education, listening over and over again to me reading out my essays, applications and now, finally, my thesis to check for clarity. I hope to maybe give you a bit of a break for a while now, but I can't make any promises! Thank you, also, to my Dad, Terry Toone, for always feeding me, meeting me and making me laugh. Thank you to my sister, Jodie-Marie Gosling, for "being the smart one" (not her words), listening to me rant and generally being encouraging, kind and enthusiastic. I am lucky to have you all as my closest family. I'm also appreciative of the support of my "buddy", Martin Walsh, who never stops singing my praises and is genuinely one of the nicest people I have ever met. Thank you, and I feel another Betty's trip coming along soon!

Finally, enormous thanks to Aaron Cameron, my husband, who has supported me throughout my PhD journey, remaining calm, kind and thoughtful towards me and my emotional turmoil which he has had to live with for the last three years! Living with someone completing a PhD is not easy, no matter how simple he made it look and I'm not sure I will ever be able to fully show how much I appreciate being able to share all my thoughts, feelings and (many) tears with him.

Thank you.

Contents

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

ABC   Acceptable Behaviour Contract

ASB   Antisocial Behaviour

ASBO   Anti Social Behaviour Order

BME   Black and Minority Ethnic

IPNA   Injunction to Prevent Nuisance and
            Annoyance

KI   Key Informant

LA   Local Authority

NOSP   Notice of Seeking Possession

Chapter 1: Thesis introduction

The management of what was termed 'antisocial behaviour' (henceforth referred to as ASB) was introduced in the 1990s by the New Labour Party who stated that residents on some more marginalised estates were regularly suffering from abuse, disorder and intimidation by certain individuals and argued that nothing was being done to resolve this situation (Burney, 2005). Therefore, policy was introduced to tackle ASB, defined ambiguously as behaviour causing nuisance, annoyance, alarm or distress. New Labour and the subsequent Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition and Conservative administrations introduced numerous measures to control this reported behaviour. Social housing was a key context in which ASB legislation was applied, with responses within this arena ranging from a warning letter or mediation to legal action and eviction from social housing properties (Tyler, 2013). These responses arguably represented further control of, and criminalisation of, non-criminal behaviour, specifically targeted at marginalised populations, with little attention paid to structural explanations of apparently nuisance behaviour (Burney, 2005; Crossley, 2017). Much meaningful work has been written about ASB in the decades since its introduction, but surprisingly little work has engaged with the alleged perpetrators of this behaviour, especially within recent years, despite changes to both policy and the ASB interventions available in practice within this time. This thesis focuses on the views of social housing tenants who have been alleged to be engaged in ASB and therefore are on the receiving end of interventions applied by social housing providers and introduced to manage so-called nuisance behaviour. It explores the experiences and perceptions of alleged perpetrators of ASB on how ASB is defined, how interventions are experienced and the impact interventions have on them. This is explored using the lens of vulnerability to explore difference within lived experiences of interventions.

This opening and introductory chapter firstly provides detail of the researcher's background, both academically and as a housing practitioner, to identify why the perspectives of alleged perpetrators of ASB were of particular interest to her. Next, the theoretical underpinnings of the research are briefly introduced, followed by a short overview of literature related to the topic. The aims and research questions of

the project are subsequently presented before an outline of the methods used is provided. Finally, the structure of the thesis is set out.

1.1: Motivation and background

Prior to undertaking this PhD, I worked at a housing association, firstly as a Customer Services Advisor and later, as a Neighbourhood Officer. In both these roles I received and logged complaints about ASB and, in the second role, I was responsible for managing these complaints. During my time working as a housing officer, and through my concurrent Undergraduate and Postgraduate studies, I began to feel a conflict between how I believed tenancies and complaints should be managed and how the organisation stated they should be handled. I recognised that many of the people who had complaints of ASB made about them had unmet support needs and challenges in their lives that made meeting their tenancy obligations harder, but also that they did not get the opportunity to have their say about how they felt about the ASB procedure. Whilst complainants of ASB were interviewed and surveyed after a case had been closed, alleged perpetrators were not offered the same opportunities.

I also found that, increasingly, I had different views to my colleagues about the reliability or honesty of people who were allegedly engaged with ASB. Overall, my colleagues were dedicated to their jobs, tenants and to alleviating the effects of poverty and other hardships wherever possible. However, there was one example when a tenant the organisation was taken to court for ASB asked for the court date to be delayed because she had suffered a miscarriage. On behalf of the tenant, I requested the ASB team apply for the court date to be pushed back, however, my colleagues in the housing and ASB departments doubted her integrity. On this occasion, as well as others, I recognised that where a tenant's behaviour was challenging or seen as deviant, they were less likely to be seen as trustworthy, believable, or in need of support. Accessing wider concepts conditionality in welfare provision and issues related to vulnerability through my academic studies helped to contextualise and offer fresh insight into my experiences of practice. Therefore, I wanted to explore these issues through research in order to illuminate the complexities and wider context of the individuals in question (further reflection on the

ethical and practical implications of 'insider' research is provided in Chapter 4, section 4.5.2).

1.2: ASB, welfare provision and housing

Social welfare can be understood as providing for and supporting citizens, but also as a form of social control (Innes, 2003). Within welfare, the arena of social housing can be viewed not only as a means of meeting a duty to provide citizens with a basic requirement of shelter, but as a mechanism of controlling the population, reflecting wider political and economic struggles (Madden and Marcuse, 2016). In social welfare more broadly, and social housing in particular, we have seen an increase in social control mechanisms in recent decades, with welfare conditionality (which is characterised by access to social rights being conditional on meeting certain responsibilities or behaviours) playing an increasingly important role in welfare delivery (Dwyer, 2004a; 2004b). Policies related to ASB within social housing can be argued to fit easily within welfare conditionality debates, with interventions related to ASB explicitly aimed at managing or changing behaviour and access to social housing conditional on adhering to set conditions of behaviour (Batty, Flint and McNeill, 2018; Flint, 2018; McNeill, 2014).

Whilst social housing provision has arguably always involved elements of welfare conditionality (alongside welfare provision) through the use of tenancy agreements, with access to and retention of social housing contingent on behaviour such as paying rent and looking after the property, control of behaviour has intensified in this context through the introduction of ASB policies and procedures (Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018). The amount of social housing provision has also reduced significantly, with successive government policies from the 1970s aimed at reducing the size and scope of social housing provision, significantly decreasing the income and housing stock of social housing providers (Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017; Tunstall, 2018; Ward, Blenkinsopp and Mccauley-Smith, 2010). Increasingly, access to social housing is more difficult due to constrained resources and social housing is typically now perceived as homes for the most vulnerable in society (Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017; McNeill, 2014; Rhodes and Mullins, 2009). With ASB interventions often delivered in practice by social housing providers, ASB policies are, then, often focused on changing the behaviour of the relatively more vulnerable individuals

increasingly found within social housing (see Chapter 3, sections 3.3 and 3.5 for discussion on residualisation in social housing) rather than the wider population (Burney, 2005, Carr and Cowan, 2006). The right to secure housing was brought to the forefront of current debate and policy responses internationally as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with housing measures fitting broadly into two categories: the retention of housing (including temporary bans on eviction, as seen in the UK) and the rapid rehousing of homeless people (Vilenica et al., 2020). However, recovery measures following crises can often increase austerity measures, criminalisation, privatisation and deregulation, revealing and intensifying existing inequalities and exacerbating vulnerability (Vilenica et al., 2020).

In housing and ASB policy, the concept of vulnerability has become increasingly important, particularly following the death of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter in 2007 who were victim to severe and sustained ASB. Whilst the term vulnerability is contested, how vulnerability is defined and understood in policy and practice is important to understanding experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB, as different understandings can impact service provision (Brown 2014; 2015). The term that is used in practice is generally a more normative understanding of vulnerability as an issue to be resolved rather than a nuanced, careful conceptualisation (Brown, 2015). This thesis develops and applies a working definition of vulnerability which combines the lived experiences of individual, structural and situational vulnerability. Exploring ASB through the lens of vulnerability highlights how different groups may be further marginalised and impacted by the behavioural conditions placed on them. By using a nuanced understanding of vulnerability, this thesis offers a multi-faceted understanding of ASB and the impacts ASB interventions have on the (often arguably vulnerable) social tenants subject to them.

After first being defined in policy in the Housing Act 1996, ASB has remained notoriously indistinct. The term has been re-defined multiple times in subsequent policy changes (Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003; Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014) however, in all policy developments, the definition of ASB has remained vague and open to interpretation, using phrases such as behaviour that causes "alarm or distress" or "nuisance and annoyance" (Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, pg. 2). ASB, then, can include a continuum of

behaviours from more minor transgressions such as poor garden upkeep or minor neighbour disputes to more severe harassment, violence or criminal damage (Flint, 2018; Mackenzie et al., 2010; Nixon and Parr, 2006).

There has been limited research into the perspectives of alleged perpetrators of ASB in social housing and where this research does exist, the majority has been outside the context of social housing and/or part of an evaluation of mostly supportive projects rather than the impact of more punitive interventions. Nevertheless, the available ASB research highlights issues of understanding (Blackmore, 2007; Brown, 2011), lack of investigation (Nixon and Hunter, 2001; 2006; Scott, 2006), inappropriate or excessive intervention (Crawford, Lewis and Taylor, 2017), the presence of violence (Flint, 2018; Jones et al., 2006), a lack of support (Hunter, Nixon and Shayer, 2000; Nixon and Parr, 2006) and a blurred boundary between who is classed as a victim or a perpetrator of ASB (Nixon and Parr, 2006, Scott, 2006) which, combined, could call into question the efficacy and ethicality of ASB interventions. There is evidence that alleged perpetrators often have multiple, underlying vulnerabilities, suggesting those who may be classed as vulnerable are often on the receiving end of ASB interventions, with difference and diversity a key area that could be explored further through the lens of vulnerability (Brown, 2013; Hunter, et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2006; Kuran et al., 2020). For example, women appear to be more likely to receive punitive interventions, including losing their home, due to behaviour caused by violent or disruptive male partners and (often male) teenage children and appear to be repeatedly held responsible for their own domestic abuse (Carr, 2010; Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Jones et al., 2006) and the behaviour of disabled people experiencing mental ill-health may be misconstrued as antisocial behaviour (Hunter et al., 2007; Krayer et al., 2018; Nixon et al., 2008; Parr, 2008). However, this status of vulnerability is highly contested in arenas such as ASB policy and questions remain about how the most vulnerable are treated in practice.

1.3: Research aims

Against this backdrop, the aims of this research are:

- To explore how antisocial behaviour is defined and perceived by social housing tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB

- To consider how ASB interventions are experienced over time by social tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB

- To consider the impact of ASB interventions on the behaviour and vulnerability of social housing tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB, including changes over time

- To consider how a focus on lived experiences of social housing tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB can help further understandings of vulnerability.

From these aims, research questions were developed (outlined in the introduction to Chapter 4), including questions related to the definition of ASB, lived experiences of ASB intervention and the impact ASB interventions have over time. How these experiences may be structured by gender and disability, and what lived experiences can add to understandings of vulnerability in relation to ASB and housing is also considered.

1.4: Overview of methods

The research methods used for this project include a literature review, qualitative longitudinal interviews with social tenants and qualitative contextual interviews with Key Informants. Two waves of repeat qualitative longitudinal interviews were undertaken with 15 social housing tenants who had been alleged to be engaged in ASB. These tenants were followed in 'real' time as the ASB cases were managed and developed by their social landlord, with the first interview shortly after an allegation had been made and the second approximately 6 to 9 months later (Neale, 2019; Saldaña, 2003). Additionally, single, qualitative interviews were undertaken with 5 Key Informants of ASB who held roles within social housing organisations such as Neighbourhood Services Managers and ASB Managers. These interviews helped to provide context to the interviews with alleged perpetrators and allowed for the comparison of service user and service provider perspectives. Whilst qualitative longitudinal research can be complex, time consuming and costly, it can allow for the collection of detailed, rich and informative data and is especially useful for exploring change (or lack of change) over time (Corden and Millar, 2007a; 2007b; Corden and Nice, 2007). Qualitative longitudinal methods also offer insight into the interplay of

structure and agency, considering the relationship between individuals, historical processes and present structures, policy and practice (Neale, 2019; Saldaña, 2003). Reflexive practice was also important, particularly when considering the researcher's own 'insiderness' to the topic (Dobson, 2009).

1.5: Structure of this thesis

Following on from this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 tracks the development of ASB in policy and practice with particular attention paid to the definitional issues related to the term antisocial behaviour. Attention is given to how ASB interventions are experienced by often vulnerable tenants by presenting the existing research into the perspectives of alleged perpetrators of ASB. Chapter 3 outlines and critically explores the concept of vulnerability, considering how it is defined policy and how a more nuanced, intersectional approach to vulnerability can offer a useful lens through which to understand experiences of ASB interventions which are aimed, in part, at changing the behaviour of certain groups who could be classed as vulnerable (specifically, marginalised populations within social housing, women, disabled people, those in poverty and those claiming social welfare benefits). Whilst in ASB policy and practice, a generally normative definition of vulnerability is used to identify those who need extra support, this chapter supports moves towards a more nuanced understanding of vulnerability, considering intersections of individual, structural and situational vulnerability, with particular attention paid to the role of social divisions in structuring lived experiences of ASB perpetrators.

Chapter 4 presents the methodology and research methods underpinning the research project. The chapter sets out the ontological and epistemological assumptions behind the research and provides detail on the qualitative, longitudinal methods used in the project, specifically qualitative longitudinal interviews with social tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB and single, contextual interviews with Key Informants. Within this chapter there are also three reflective sections on the research encounters, the researcher's former role as a housing officer in a social housing organisation and the impact of Covid-19 on the project.

Chapters 5 – 7 then report from qualitative data generated in the fieldwork. Chapter 5 focuses on how ASB is defined in practice, firstly exploring how the imprecise

definition of ASB in policy is applied and defined by alleged perpetrators of ASB, comparing these definitions with those offered by Key Informants. In addition, how poor housing quality, close proximity to neighbours and neighbour relations impact what behaviour is perceived as ASB is explored. The uneven balance of who is seen as a perpetrator of ASB is also considered, highlighting the vulnerability of alleged perpetrators who are often victims of ASB or crime themselves and whose private rental or homeowner counterparts do not face the same scrutiny related to their behaviour. Chapter 6 explores how ASB interventions are experienced more generally amongst those who are deemed 'perpetrators' of ASB, focussing particularly on how the process of being subject to interventions is perceived as disempowering and characterised by poor levels of communication. Additionally, the intended impact of ASB interventions, i.e., behaviour change, is also discussed, with categories of behaviour change presented and explored, including required change, unintended change, lack of change, resistance to change and intermittent change. Chapter 7 then focuses on tenant vulnerability and the interplay of sanction and support in ASB interventions, discussing issues of difference and diversity and their significance in how interventions are experienced. Tenant perceptions of landlord supportiveness are presented, followed by a discussion related to the impact of ASB interventions on vulnerability, including changes to ontological security and the experiences of women and those with disabilities. This underlines that the vulnerability and support needs of those 'perpetrators' who at the same time are victims of domestic abuse and/or those affected by disability or ill-health may be side-lined, ignored or negatively impacted by ASB interventions. Finally, the conclusion, Chapter 8, reiterates and draws together the key findings emerging from the study and situates these in relation to previous academic and policy debate, proposing key recommendations for future policy and practice. Attention to perpetrator perspectives raises serious questions about the justifications for and justice of ASB interventions, as well as showing the limitations of support for those who might be deemed amongst the most vulnerable in society.

Chapter 2: Antisocial behaviour in social housing: policy and practice development

Although ASB is now a well-established feature of the policy landscape, its development has been contentious. This chapter sets out and analyses the development of policy and practice related to ASB within the social housing sector. Firstly, the intellectual and political roots of ASB policy are discussed, considering how a process of increasing individualisation can be seen to have led to a shift towards more conditional welfare provision. ASB policy and practice can be seen to be part of this increasingly conditional welfare provision. Next, this chapter presents a discussion outlining the differential interpretations, conceptualisations and understandings of ASB, identifying the persistent lack of clear definition for nuisance behaviour. This is followed by an outline of policy developments over time, considering the introduction of multi-agency partnerships and the different ASB interventions currently available. Finally, section 2.4 reviews the existing research into ASB which explores the points of view of alleged perpetrators, highlighting key themes within the existing literature.

2.1: Background and key context: changing constellations of care and control

Changing ideas from the 1970s on security and control can help us to understand the introduction of ASB interventions in social housing. Since the late 1970s, there has arguably been a process of increasing individualisation of the social world in England and Wales (as well as elsewhere in the world), with a weakening of collectivist traditions and the intensification of the importance ascribed to individualist values, critical context for making sense of the ways in which ASB interventions were conceived and how they operate. It has been widely argued that citizens feel the increased importance of actively navigating the social world, which is perceived as unpredictable, risky and insecure, as individuals (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; Gelsthorpe 2013; Hiscock et al., 2001; Stonehouse, Threlkeld and Theobald, 2020). This sense of insecurity has been linked with an elevated fear of crime for citizens, in turn shaping a rise in the increased use of measures to control or regulate people, areas and behaviours through formal and informal social controls, including the further use of contracts in social housing to prevent nuisance behaviour (Crawford,

2003; Innes, 2003). This process of the individualisation of social risk valorises individual participation in the paid labour market and engagement with social norms of responsible behaviour, which leads to further social exclusion of individuals and groups who may not be able to engage with these expected norms (Thompson, 2011), for example those implicated in the coverage of ASB interventions.

Considering deeper social currents at play in the management of problem populations, Atkinson (2015) suggests social anxieties and fears can result in specific policies targeting groups or places that are perceived as problematic or deviant. According to these ideas, ASB interventions can be interpreted as expressions of social anger and as a catharsis for social anxieties and fear. Madden and Marcuse (2016) argue that the stigmatisation of social housing areas and social tenants is a symbolic form of class violence in itself. Both the media and public officials portray areas of social housing and social tenants as problematic, dangerous or deviant which focuses the anxieties and fears of the general population onto marginalised and politically weak groups in order to garner political support, with targeted behavioural interventions related to ASB as one element of this response. The simplification of complex structural issues as the result of individual responsibility or choice, Atkinson (2015) argues, constructs excluded groups as scapegoats on which to project social problems, inequalities and anxieties. ASB perpetrators living within social housing, then, are seen as especially deviant and held responsible for their own disadvantage, as well as wider social problems (Atkinson, 2015; Crossley, 2018a).

Whilst it may be accepted that everyone in society is likely to be subject to some form of control over their behaviour, the increasingly punitive shift in control mechanisms experienced by ASB perpetrators appears to be aimed disproportionately at socially excluded or vulnerable groups (Gregory, 2018; Wacquant, 2008). For many commentators, the targeting of specific, marginalised groups is a means of masking the impact of deep socioeconomic problems and social anxieties by placing blame and responsibility for solutions on these populations (Atkinson, 2006; Harrison and Sanders, 2014]. Wacquant (2008) argues that over recent decades, the state reduced its social and economic interests in favour of the market in many economic issues whilst simultaneously increasing state

involvement in the enforcement of moral and social order for those most impacted by economic changes. This state involvement included the increased controls and criminalisation of so-called incivilities or antisocial behaviours which are specifically targeted at the behaviour of poorer populations rather than the behaviour of more privileged groups such as white-collar or corporate crime. Those in poverty (and especially women, those from Black and Ethnic Minorities or immigrants) are often perceived as "morally deficient unless they periodically provide visible proof to the contrary" (Wacquant, 2008, pg. 15).

2.1: The political underpinnings of ASB policy and discourse

The term ASB originally took root within the discipline of psychology, defined within this discipline as individual pathologies that display themselves in unusual, challenging or harmful behaviours that can be directed at the self or others (Sinnamon, 2017). Whilst nuisance behaviour has arguably always existed, the idea of actively intervening in this behaviour was not a mainstream political issue prior to New Labour's focus on tackling minor incivilities (Johnstone, 2016), or what they termed antisocial behaviour. Although New Labour did define ASB differently to the original psychological definition of the term, the individualised understanding of ASB offered in psychology can be seen to have informed mainstream debates of this concept (Sinnamon, 2017; Squires, 2006). This history of the rise of ASB policy is well chronicled (Bannister and O'Sullivan, 2014; Burney, 2005; Carr and Cowan, 2006; Crawford and Flint, 2009; Johnstone, 2016; Millie, 2007; Squires, 2006; Tyler, 2013), showing how New Labour began discussing ASB in earnest during their election campaign in the 1990s, following what was widely considered a period of consistently falling crime levels. Despite apparently reduced crime levels, New Labour accused the (then) current and previous Conservative administrations of reigning over a period of increasing crime rates, specifically related to nuisance and incivilities which they termed ASB (Bannister and O'Sullivan, 2014). Their conceptualisation of ASB, which covered behaviours ranging from the mundane to criminal behaviour, suggested that ASB was symptomatic of a much larger problem; a threat to the current social and moral order (Squires, 2006). Appearing to draw on the broken windows theory (discussed immediately below), New Labour argued that there was a need to intervene in low level nuisance to improve the quality of life of

residents experiencing ASB and to prevent further criminality in the future, with areas of high density social housing occupying a position of prominence in this political narrative (Bannister and O'Sullivan, 2014; Carr and Cowan, 2006; Crawford and Flint, 2009; Johnstone, 2016; Mackenzie, 2015).

The broken windows theory has been extensively critiqued elsewhere (Burney, 2005; Harcourt, 2001; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999). For present purposes it is useful to briefly introduce the concept, popular within public order debates related to inner city housing estates at the time of New Labour's election campaign and subsequent governments. Wilson and Kelling (1982) developed the broken windows thesis related to disadvantaged estates. They believed if a window is broken and left unfixed, this leads to other windows being broken as it gives the impression no-one cares; the presence of environmental disorder can cause disorder. This leads to the breakdown of control in a community and could lead to parents no longer disciplining their children, who, it is argued, then become more unruly (Wilson and Kelling, 1982). Social housing estates, experiencing increased residualisation and reduced property quality were argued to be areas of high levels of disorder and therefore areas that need more targeted intervention to prevent further nuisance behaviour and crime (Stark, 2013). Applied under the banner of ASB, the broken windows thesis leads in the direction of increased policing of, and reduced tolerance of, minor incivilities as they are viewed as the start of further nuisance or crime and therefore require formal and punitive action taken against them (Bannister and O'Sullivan, 2014; Burney, 2005; Johnstone, 2016). Whilst there have been some studies that have supported this theory, including Skogan (1992), who made a link between increased levels of disorder and the occurrence of robberies, many commentators have questioned the legitimacy of the broken windows theory, suggesting structural issues are more likely to lead to incivility and crime rather than the mere presence of incivility from others, and Skogan's (1992) methodology has also been robustly criticised (Burney, 2005; Harcourt, 2001; Sampson and Raudenbush, 1999).

Despite resting on traditions of scholarship which have been subject to such heavy critique, the concept of ASB has maintained popular resonance with citizens, alongside the belief that nuisance and antisocial behaviour is symptomatic of more serious crime, especially in relation to high-concentration social housing areas. The

rhetoric of disorder as a major problem led to the perception of increased crime rates, despite evidence that crime rates had fallen and were continuing to fall during the New Labour governments, although it is worth noting that not all crime gets recorded in official statistics, meaning these official statistics may not show the full picture (Bannister and O'Sullivan, 2014; Kennedy, 1988; Levitt, 1998). This led to increased public anxiety about antisocial behaviours (Bannister and O'Sullivan, 2014) and, Squires (2006) argues, reconceptualised a relatively minor issue of nuisance behaviour into a major threat to the social order. Therefore, ASB and low-level crime became hyper-politicised under the New Labour governments and this period of governance saw a high volume of significant new powers for managing ASB, with a focus on intensified welfare conditionality (access to social rights reliant on meeting set conditions of behaviour: Dwyer, 2004a; 2004b; Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018) and challenge to previously established assumptions about the threshold for intervention into behaviour (Squires, 2006).

Under the New Labour government, the welfare system in England and Wales also saw a broader move away from a more rights-based approach to welfare seen post-WW2 (albeit containing criteria related to need and status), to more narrowly-defined conditional welfare, leading to the increased responsibilities of citizens in order to access their social rights (Crawford, 2009; Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018). Welfare conditionality has always been a feature of western liberal democracies welfare state provision, however, across many of the UK's welfare provisions, there has been an increase in levels of welfare conditionality. Even for supposedly universal benefits, accessible to most or all citizens, meeting some set conditions has always been present, including whether the claimant is a legal citizen of the country, whether they are seen as in need and whether they have completed administrative conditions such as completing forms, responding to letters and providing information to welfare providers (Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018). However, especially since the 1990s, increasing levels of welfare conditionality have been a pronounced and expanding feature of UK welfare provision, with conduct-related conditions within ASB policy a classic exemplar (Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018). Welfare conditionality is characterised by a reduced focus on the protection of individuals from social risks and losses of income, alongside an increased emphasis on changing the behaviour of those who wish to claim welfare. An individual must agree to compulsory

responsibilities or behaviours in order to access basic, publicly provided social welfare benefits and services, with failure to meet the responsibilities or behavioural requirements resulting in sanction, regardless of meeting other eligibility criteria such as need or citizenship (Dwyer, 2004a; Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018).

ASB interventions in social housing can be seen as a key arena of intensified conditional welfare as fear of losing a home, or of being unable to access one at all, are especially powerful sanctions which can encourage or coerce tenants and potential tenants into certain behaviours. It has been argued more generally that welfare conditionality in social housing has been "extended" and "intensified" (Dwyer, 2016, pg.44) in recent years, with allocation policies determining who is able to apply for and access social housing accompanied by tenancy law which outlines behavioural criteria (Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018). Typically, social housing tenancy agreements now include clauses to ban antisocial or nuisance behaviour within the locality of the home and hold the tenant responsible for household members and visitors (Burney, 2005; Campbell et al., 2016). This means that whilst not all interventions related to ASB fall under the remit of welfare conditionality (for example, any interventions used against homeowners, although these are admittedly rare, see Hunter, 2006), for those that claim welfare in the form of social housing, avoidance of receiving allegations of ASB is a condition of claiming this form of welfare.

Alongside changes in the remit of welfare provision, the criminal justice system was also seen as needing to change, with more of a focus on the protection of individuals and communities who are seen as law-abiding, from those 'others' who are antisocial and/or criminal (Crawford, 2009; Rodgers, 2022). The criminal justice system was criticised by New Labour as slow, cumbersome and in need of reform in order to manage ASB quickly and effectively (Crawford, 2009; Squires, 2006). In order to increase the protections of victims of ASB, there was argued to be a need to streamline the regulation of antisocial behaviour through new interventions that were quicker and easier than existing criminal justice interventions (Crawford, 2009). ASB legislation, situated within civil law, have been argued to significantly challenge traditional criminal justice processes and widen the net on behaviours that are managed, particularly due to their ability to side-track traditional criminal justice

processes in order to have a quicker, and generally punitive, response (Crawford, 2009; Millie, 2007). As interventions within civil law require lower standards of proof, ASB interventions arguably circumvent or at least significantly alter due process for allegations of criminal behaviour. There is also a question of how proportionality and special protections for vulnerable people may be undermined through ASB procedures where social problems are associated with individual agency rather than vulnerability (Crawford, 2009; Flint, 2018; Newlove, 2019; Squires, 2006). Whilst some ASB perpetrators subject to ASB interventions may be also perceived as vulnerable, this vulnerability is generally painted in a negative light and seen as an issue to be resolved such as through the Troubled Families Programme which held families at least partly responsible for any vulnerability (Crossley, 2017; Crossley, 2018a; 2018b). Although support for vulnerable populations such as women and children has also arguably increased in importance or profile since the 2000s, for those who are seen as antisocial, this support often comes alongside interventions explicitly aimed at controlling behaviour or together, as Dobson (2019, pg. 6) argues, "care and support *as* control" [emphasis in original].

Sidestepping reasons why behaviour may be seen as challenging, other than a surface level explanation within government rhetoric that ASB is committed by those who are simply disrespectful and antisocial, New Labour instead focused on the argument that the criminal justice system and, subsequently, wider society, had previously been too tolerant towards those who were antisocial and additional enforcement powers had been long overdue (Squires, 2006). Causation, reason and intent were generally not considered when deciding how to respond to ASB, leading to problems for vulnerable groups experiencing mental ill-health, learning disabilities, domestic abuse and/or poverty (Squires, 2006). Millie (2007) suggests that whilst ASB does exist, it was oversold by the New Labour Party to help them gain power; New Labour argued ASB was a main (or even the main) concern for many citizens. However, results from large scale surveys in 2004/2005 found little agreement amongst respondents on what the main behaviours of ASB could be, although a large proportion thought this was related to youth behaviour. The majority also said they did not experience negative effects from ASB in their area, and of those who said they had experienced ASB, there was not always a severe negative impact on them. However, "noisy neighbours" appeared to have a high impact on the quality of

life of those experiencing it, with 49% stating it had a high impact, compared to 21% who reported "young people hanging around" as a problem for them (Millie, 2007, pg.616). Findings from this survey, which suggested that the majority of people do not experience ASB, and that the majority of those that do are not significantly negatively impacted by it does call into question why ASB has been seen as a political priority and whether it should be. That being said, for some citizens, especially in more deprived areas and within social housing estates, ASB may be more likely to be perceived and/or experienced and to have a negative impact (Egan et al., 2012; Mackenzie et al., 2010; Millie, 2007).

Following the election of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition and the subsequent Conservative governments, ASB was discussed in government rhetoric and public discourse less but has arguably remained an important area of intervention and successive governments have remained committed to the ASB agenda (Johnstone, 2016). Following the London riots in 2011, ASB interventions were, again, seen as important tools through which to intervene in the lives of apparently nuisance populations (Crossley, 2018a). The lives of those in poverty, particularly those in social housing properties, were placed under intense scrutiny and their lives, parenting, jobs, houses and spending habits were held up as examples of irresponsible behaviours which needed to be changed through ASB policy and practice (Ahmed, 2017; Crossley, 2018a; 2018b; Tyler, 2013). Which behaviours are seen as irresponsible and antisocial is not, however, clear cut, and it is the competing understandings, conceptualisations and definitions of ASB that this chapter now considers.

2.2: Competing definitions of ASB

The term ASB incorporates a large array of behaviours, including low level environmental issues such as littering, to serious criminal activity such as physical violence and harassment (Mackenzie et al., 2010). This definition can be argued to be political, with a politically packaged set of behaviours that would otherwise not be grouped together and which can be interpreted and re-interpreted in different ways depending on the political goal (Carr and Cowan, 2006; Mackenzie et al., 2010; Millie, 2007). ASB was first defined as "conduct causing or likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to a person residing in, visiting or otherwise engaging in lawful activity

in residential premises" (Housing Act 1996, pg. 92 – see Table 1 below for a Policy Timeline). This apparently catch-all definition arguably leaves what is termed as ASB open to interpretation by enforcers of the policy such as social landlords or the police rather than providing a clear guideline of what is antisocial. However, the problem of unclear and vague definitions is not limited to ASB; similar issues may arise in criminal law, such as the term violence, which can cover a broad range of behaviour (Matthew and Briggs, 2008). Over time, since this initial Act, the definition of ASB has gradually broadened, although the early definitions offered by New Labour were not without controversy, with academic commentators repeatedly highlighting that the term was unclear (Burney, 2005; Carr and Cowan, 2006; Warburton et al., 1997). For some, however, this broad definition was seen as positive, allowing for more flexible and locally sensitive approaches to behaviour that is seen as a nuisance to the community (Carr and Cowan, 2006; Millie, 2007). The Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition introduced the most recent legislative definition of ASB which broadened the definition even further to:

(a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person;

(b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises; or

(c) conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person (Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014, pg. 2).

It is significant that this steady broadening of the original, catch-all definition of ASB over time has removed the need for intention to cause nuisance, with behaviour needing only the possibility of being "capable of causing nuisance or annoyance" in this latest Act (Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014, pg. 2). Alongside the increasing number of available ASB interventions for practitioners (policies and interventions are discussed in sections 2.3 and 2.4 below), this broadened definition can be argued to further criminalise non-criminal behaviour, supporting the argument that almost any behaviour could now be termed as ASB and therefore in need of intervention (Blackmore, 2007; Edwards, 2015). Rather than providing a clear guideline of unacceptable behaviour, policy definitions leave the

interpretation of ASB to practitioners, stakeholders and individuals, arguably compounding the issues surrounding the original and imprecise Housing Act 1996 definition. These definitional shortcomings have become central to ASB scholarship (Burney, 2005; Carr and Cowan, 2006; Mackenzie et al., 2010; Millie, 2007; 2008; Warburton et al., 1997).

Alongside the definitions provided in policy, ASB has also been repeatedly alluded to by politicians as common sense, i.e., "we all know what it is when we see or experience it" (Carr and Cowan, 2006, pg. 2-3). However, even within guidance documents provided by the New Labour government, the definition of ASB remained unclear. Carr and Cowan (2006) compared three New Labour government lists of behaviours classed as antisocial, including two reports from the Home Office and one report from the Social Exclusion Unit and found little agreement between the lists. One list (from the Social Exclusion Unit) included violence and racist incidents, whereas the Home Office lists focused on much less serious behaviour such as vandalism or hoax calls (although there were still differences within between them). Whilst the behaviours on these lists do not appear to offer clarity on the definition of ASB, they are arguably still persuasive, with groups of behaviours linked together to form a general impression of nuisance and disorder, building a common sense argument that ASB is recognisable, even where no evidence is presented that confirms that these behaviours are related (Carr and Cowan, 2006). Whilst these lists suggest ASB can be defined as individual acts, commentators and government rhetoric has highlighted the importance of the cumulative nature of ASB (Millie, 2007; 2008; Squires, 2006). The cumulative impact of ASB on individuals and groups, which has been suggested to include interpersonal or malicious ASB that is specifically targeting individuals, groups or organisations, environmental ASB and ASB that restricts access for others in public spaces (adapted from Millie, 2008, pg. 614), was argued to justify specific interventions for ASB outside of the criminal justice system, which was suggested to only manage isolated incidents (Squires, 2006).

Alongside the specific (isolated or repeated) behaviours, ASB has often been defined in academic scholarship and government discourse by the harm (or potential harm) caused by that behaviour (Millie, 2007). In fact, it has been argued that ASB is

more likely to be defined by the effect or likely effect on other people or on areas, rather than any specific act itself (Crawford, 2003). Crawford (2003) highlights how this represents a reduced tolerance for behaviours that are deviant but not necessarily criminal, lowering the threshold for intervention into behaviour. This definition also incorporates public perceptions of social norms, with transgressions of social norms becoming antisocial and potentially harmful (Crawford, 2009). However, personal, cultural and social understandings of behavioural norms can mean that individuals or groups can see behaviours of other individuals and groups as antisocial simply because their behaviour does not fall within our own individually perceived behavioural norms (Burney, 2005; Millie, 2008). These norms are contextually and geographically specific and can also lead to stereotyped judgements about certain groups of people (e.g., young people, homeless people, those with mental health issues etc.) whose behaviour, and sometimes just their presence, is deemed problematic or intimidating. This means interventions can become methods of exclusion of certain groups rather than certain behaviours (Millie, 2008). Millie (2008) provided his interpretation of ASB which he argues considers the context and social norms. ASB for Millie (2008) is based on the behaviour, the place and time, the behavioural and aesthetic expectations for that context and whether the behaviour causes harm or offence to an individual or group. If harm or offence is caused, behaviour is likely to be censured as ASB or crime. If there is no harm or offence, or it is limited, the behaviour might be celebrated (e.g., Banksy's graffiti), or tolerated. However, Millie (2008) acknowledged the challenges offered by this definition, particularly in deciding whose view of behaviour is accepted as simply using the views of the majority can take away the rights of more marginalised groups to use public or personal space as they wish and/or need to.

The interpretive definition of ASB offered in policy and practice has been argued to allow ASB interventions to be used in a way that is locally sensitive and flexible to differing contexts and gives the term power to manage a large range of behaviours (Carr and Cowan, 2006; Millie, 2007). Front-line staff, or street-level bureaucrats to use Lipsky's (2010) term, routinely use their discretionary powers to define (un)acceptable behaviour in their properties. When identifying ASB and implementing interventions, front-line staffs' interpretations and judgements of specific behaviours often change depending on time, location and their individual

perceptions (Brown, 2013). As well as housing staff, other front-line officers have also been found to interpret ASB policy and practice differently. Krayer, Robinson and Poole (2018) interviewed police officers and mental health professionals and found these front-line workers interpret ASB differently between and within organisations. Police stated they could attend the same job and would deal with it differently. One example provided by staff was that people who self-harmed could be classed as antisocial if someone was distressed by the act of self-harming, suggesting the punishment of manifestations of mental-ill health (Krayer et al., 2018).

Context is important for ASB, particularly if we consider how the same behaviour deemed acceptable in one setting may be deemed problematic in another (Millie, 208; Wooff, 2015). Wooff (2015) conducted research with police forces and young people, exploring rural policing of ASB in Scotland. Whilst Scotland does manage ASB slightly differently to England and Wales (where this research is focused), Wooff (2015) found that how ASB is managed relies on recognition of local community norms and expectations of acceptable behaviour. Police officers valued discretion and suggested that to use discretion appropriately it was important to really understand the community and the people in it (although discretion can be problematic, sometimes seen as a coercive mechanism that may not always benefit service users: Dwyer et al, 2015; Power and Bergen, 2018). Combined with resource and geographical concerns, this might mean that the same behaviour in one area may result in arrest or other formal action, whereas in another area it may result in an informal warning. Whilst this could be argued to add to the confusion about what is acceptable behaviour, the ability to interpret the policies and use discretion was valued in the local community police forces.

However, the same behaviour in the same setting may also be perceived differently, leading to issues about whose interpretation of ASB policy is important. The city, a place of residence, is also a place of the night-time economy, cultural expression, a meeting place and a place of indulgence, including alcohol-induced noise, activities and behaviours. Night-time public space can have different and often oppositional meanings for different citizens, visitors, workers, agencies and institutions, making them contested areas of the city (Crawford and Flint, 2009). Additionally, whilst public perceptions of wrongdoing are seen as particularly important when managing

ASB and community safety, local policies and responses to ASB often do not reflect the number of victims or the prevalence of the issue for local communities (Crawford, 2009; Matthew and Briggs, 2008). Instead, focus appears to be on individual council priorities (in relation to their internally set targets) rather than the result of any meaningful community engagement.

There are a number of further issues related to the lack of precise definition offered for ASB. Difficulties with evidencing and measuring ASB arise from the "refusal on the part of New Labour [and subsequent governments] to define ASB in unambiguous, operational terms" (Bannister and O'Sullivan, 2014, pg. 82, insertion added). As a result of the lack of clear definition and the large range of potentially antisocial behaviours, any statistics or numbers gathered may over- or under-estimate the problem. By over-estimating, governments, police and landlords appear more justified in spending money and introducing punitive measures to tackle ASB (Carr and Cowan, 2006). Matthew and Briggs (2008) additionally highlighted how the monitoring and recording of ASB is inconsistent between areas and authorities, with many of the different systems used to monitor ASB incompatible with each other. With a lack of agreement between what is ASB and what isn't, categories used to represent ASB between and within these systems are often overlapping, incompatible and unreliable (Matthew and Briggs, 2008). The belief in widespread ASB is then also difficult to prove, or perhaps more importantly, to disprove, as it is difficult to find what has been measured and how. It appears to have become accepted that ASB is both damaging and widespread, especially in social housing estates (Atkinson, 2006; Crossley, 2017; Warburton et al., 1997). Therefore, when politicians (with apparent consensus across political parties) say ASB is a growing problem, many accept this without question.

Overall, the vague, broad and imprecise definition and responses to ASB appear to be entrenched. Issues with the initial catch-all definition have been compounded in later Acts, allowing for the maximum coverage of behaviours (Edwards, 2015). A standard definition of ASB in policy and practice has been argued to be important, as issues of vague definition leads to problems of solution (Blandy, 2006; Carr and Cowan, 2006; Mackenzie et al., 2010; Warburton et al., 1997). The lack of precise definition is particularly problematic when response to behaviour defined as

antisocial is generally punitive and impactful; it matters to those accused of it (Millie, 2007). This section will now turn to two specific elements of ASB management for which context is particularly important for defining whether the behaviour is antisocial or not, including noise and neighbour relations.

2.2.1: Noise nuisance: individual behaviour or structural problem?

The most common complaint of ASB to social landlords is noise, especially domestic noise (Burney, 2005). This is perhaps not surprising as, internationally, noise has repeatedly been found to be one of the most complained about phenomena by citizens (Hong, Byoungjun and Widener, 2020; Stokoe and Hepburn, 2005; Ureta, 2007; Yao, 2018). The term noise, or noisy, is not neutral, but can be theorised as a socially constructed phenomena which generally comes with negative connotations (Stokoe and Hepburn, 2005). Sound or noise is subjective, interpreted differently by different people and dependant on temporal, spatial and moral context (Hong et al., 2020; Stokoe and Hepburn, 2005). Noise, of course, does not just come from neighbours, but also from construction, traffic, businesses and other visitors to or residents in the neighbourhood. Excessive noise can have negative impacts on auditory health as well as mental and physical health and additionally, has been argued to sometimes lead to verbal, psychological and physical conflict between neighbours (Hong et al., 2020). Nevertheless, noise is an everyday factor of life from a range of different sources and living with noise is accepted as part of living within a town, city or countryside, albeit the sounds may be different. However, there is tension between the levels of noise citizens are willing to hear, the regulations in place to manage sound and how those regulations are applied (or not) (García Ruiz and South, 2019). Authorities may (and do) struggle to maintain a balance between the right to (domestic) privacy and rest alongside the rights of others to use their own living environments as they wish (García Ruiz and South, 2019). Noise transference between properties is not always due to excessive noise and can instead be related to property quality. Reduced construction standards and increased profiteering has led to poorer quality homes being built, and the ability to add insulation retrospectively can be more difficult (García Ruiz and South, 2019). Social housing estates arguably often suffer from multi-level deprivation, with poorer housing stock leading to an increase in reports of noise nuisance (Atkinson, 2006; Cheshire and Bulgar, 2015; Warburton, Liddle and Smith, 1997).This means that noise may travel

more easily between social housing properties. ASB policy, however, with its focus on individual behaviour, may not consider structural problems such as poor housing quality.

Mediation is often recommended for noise nuisance disputes between neighbours as noise is commonly accidental, due to poor insulation or late working hours although the availability and quality of mediation services varies nationwide (Burney, 2005; Fletcher et al., 2016; Hunter et al., 2000). However, it could be questioned whether poor insulation or late working hours should be classed as ASB as these are not due to individual behaviour. Nevertheless, mediation allows residents to reach a negotiated solution without recourse to more legal (and therefore generally more expensive for the housing provider) responses and can promote positive communication, understanding and tolerance, assuming there is an equal power dynamic between complainant and alleged perpetrator. Mediation should be voluntarily accepted by both sides in a dispute, where there is no violence, harassment or intimidation and where neither party views themselves as a victim, which can reduce the willingness of this party to meaningfully engage (Burney, 2005; Mackenzie et al., 2010; Nixon and Hunter, 2001). However, it is common for an 'us' and 'them' mindset in complainants which demonises alleged perpetrators and increases feelings of victimhood on both sides (Nixon and Parr, 2006). It could be questioned how common it is for all the criteria to be met for successful mediation. Despite this, mediation is often professed to be used as a first step in most ASB cases, even when it is accepted it may not resolve the issue on its own and where the complaint may not be easily blamed on individual behaviour and instead, be related to issues of the built environment (Cheshire and Buglar, 2015).

2.2.2: Neighbour relations and ASB

Neighbour dispute is another common complaint of ASB, although it can be difficult to identify one 'guilty' party in these cases as many reports of neighbour dispute include claims and counter-claims (Cheshire and Bulgar, 2015). The proximity of neighbours means households have a relationship with their neighbours, even when they do not know them or would not choose to spend time with them (Cheshire, Easthope and ten Have, 2021). Space, then, is an important element for neighbour relationships. Within this space of neighbour relations, there is a social moral order

which is reinforced through interaction and the ways in which individual neighbours account for their own and their neighbours' actions. When behaviour is seen to transgress the moral order held within the space, such as behaviour resulting in allegations of ASB, this can be seen as a complaint about the disruption to the socio-moral order rather than necessarily a personal harm or complaint (Stokoe and Wallwork, 2003). These behaviours enacted in the home or surrounding area can lead to the identification of apparently 'good' or 'bad' neighbour relations, with a combination of both proximity and distance. Good neighbour relations have been argued to include the ability to greet each other in the street or over the garden fence, but also to respect each other's privacy, with the relationship generally taking place outside rather than within the home (Cheshire et al., 2021; Stokoe and Wallwork, 2003). 'Bad' neighbour relations then, might include intruding on each other's privacy, a lack of consideration, confrontations and arguments, all of which could fall under a broad definition of ASB due to the potential to cause nuisance and annoyance through these actions (Cheshire et al., 2021).

Stokoe and Wallwork (2003) explored the importance of space and the social order in neighbour disputes. They argued individual space and boundaries were especially important, with transgressions onto personal boundaries showing 'bad' neighbours. Activities within other people's boundaries or properties, however, could still result in complaint, for example, rubbish in the garden or a large number of pets in the property. These activities, perceived as breaking the moral order of the neighbourhood, were made to feel worse by being able to visually see or smell the problem from their own homes, showing the importance of proximity. Whilst privacy and use of one's own space was seen as important for themselves, it appeared that when there were perceived transgressions from others, this right to privacy and control over a neighbour's own space was diminished or removed as it was seen to transgress on the personal space of others. Being able to hear neighbours in their own private space also led to constituting neighbours as bad neighbours, with neighbour activity encroaching on individual space and privacy. Neighbours who transgressed the socio-moral order were construed as an 'other', different from the 'good' neighbours that individuals believed themselves to be (Stokoe and Wallwork, 2003). This study, whilst not specifically exploring reports of ASB, can help us to understand the importance of place in neighbour relationships and disputes, with

encroachment on residents feelings of being 'at home' impacted by their neighbour's behaviours.

Building on the concept of 'home' being affected by neighbour behaviour, Cheshire et al. (2021) researched how negative neighbour relations impacted home unmaking by interviewing residents in dispute with their neighbours. They found that relatively mundane practices can be a source of dispute and complaint amongst neighbours, particularly when it is seen to impinge on an individual's own personal boundaries. Issues with neighbour conduct was not necessarily deliberate, but instead caused by proximity, shared boundaries and when one neighbour's use of their home and space spilt over into another. Due to close proximity, neighbours were able to disrupt each other's homes, albeit not necessarily intentionally, with noise that can travel between fences and walls impacting their neighbour's ability to enjoy their own homes in the way they want to. This also disrupted the resident's use of their space in the future, for example, avoiding going into the garden or street in order to avoid the noise or to avoid the neighbours completely. When relationships that were previously good or neutral experienced conflict or dispute, becoming 'bad' relationships, the previously non-deliberate acts causing nuisance may instead be seen as intentional and retaliatory. Feelings of autonomy were also reduced in the home when neighbours had complaints about each other and requested changes to behaviour or the property or had refused to make changes to their own property that was impacting another resident, such as trees hanging over the fence or blocking out light. Some people felt they had to move house because of their neighbours which, whilst showing a degree of agency with the ability to move, they felt was not something they would have chosen to do if they did not have a dispute with their neighbour. The ability to have control over one's own space was found to be more contingent for social renters than for owner occupiers, as the control enacted on residents comes from both their neighbours and their social landlords, with the risk of losing their home evident for social tenants (Cheshire et al., 2021).

Again, whilst Cheshire et al.'s (2021) study did not specifically focus on ASB, it demonstrates how the relatively mundane behaviour of neighbours can cause nuisance and impact another resident's use of their own space. This is important for ASB debates, particularly within the context of social housing, as within the social

housing, residents have the opportunity to include a third party (i.e., the housing provider) to enforce ASB legislation and change the behaviour of those seen as antisocial. The broad definition of ASB allows this very mundane behaviour to be reconceptualised into antisocial and damaging behaviour requiring formal intervention. This nuisance behaviour may also be more likely to be experienced by social housing tenants. Cheshire and Bulgar (2015), who analysed mediation cases on social housing estates, argued the close proximity and lack of privacy often found on social housing estates can lead to an environment for gossip, social conflict or dispute. Whilst social tenants can be more likely to have more intense and durable relationships with their neighbours through frequent interaction, this increased interaction can lead to increased opportunity for social conflict or dispute, likely to lead to ASB complaints (Cheshire and Bulgar, 2015). Overall, this section, and the previous one, suggest that areas with high-density, lower quality housing, very commonly social housing estates, are more likely to report problems of both noise and neighbour dispute due to the design of the built environment. This chapter now turns to the policy timeline and changes to practice over time, including individual policies and the ASB interventions that have been introduced.

2.3: Critical junctures in policy and practice

As mentioned above, ASB was first introduced into policy in the Housing Act 1996. This first Act added new grounds for the (re)possession of a property for ASB, speeded up possession proceedings and introduced ASB injunctions with the power of arrest if breached (Housing Act 1996; Burney, 2005; Dwyer, 2004; Warburton, Liddle and Smith, 1997). This was followed by the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act which enforced the creation of multi-agency partnerships, with social landlords and the police required to develop locally sensitive strategies to combat both ASB and crime. This Act also introduced Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), one of the most politically high-profile ASB interventions (Burney, 2005).

The Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 gave police the ability to serve on-the-spot fines for disorder or ASB, without needing to apply to court, with ASB practitioner powers further strengthened in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. Police were given dispersal powers against groups of young people in designated areas, environmental officers could serve on-the-spot fines to polluters and teachers were

given the power to fine parents for child truancy. Social landlords were amongst those given more powers, such as being able to apply for injunctions, use introductory tenancies and the right to deny secure tenure to those deemed antisocial, continuing the clear link in policy between social housing and ASB management (Burney, 2005; Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001).

As it has developed, ASB policy and practice has begun to focus on the needs of victims who could be classed as vulnerable. Following the death of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter in 2007 after facing sustained ASB from local youths, the strong control of perpetrators of ASB was argued to be necessary to protect vulnerable victims. The need to protect victims from further harm and to support them following abuse has become ingrained in ASB practice and discourse (Brown, 2015; Brown, 2013; vulnerability is conceptually explored in Chapter 3).

Finally, the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 was introduced by the Coalition Government. This Act replaced ASBOs with Injunctions to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance. Table 1 below provides a policy timeline for ASB alongside changes in policy related to social housing in England (relevant for the context of social housing residualisation which can be argued to increase the vulnerability of social housing tenants, see Chapter 3, sections 3.3 and 3.5).

Table 1: ASB and social housing policy timeline in England

1980s – Right to Buy and Stock Transfers	Both these policies led to the wide-spread privatisation of social housing, with relatively well-off social tenants buying their homes, and large-scale social housing stock transfers from Local Authorities to private housing associations.
Housing Act 1996	Defined ASB as "conduct causing or likely to cause a nuisance or annoyance to a person residing in, visiting or otherwise engaging in lawful activity in residential premises" (Housing Act 1996, pg. 92). This Act added new grounds for the possession of a tenancy for ASB, speeded up possession proceedings and initiated introductory council tenancies.
Noise Act 1996	Placed a duty on Local Authorities to investigate reports of late-night noise nuisance.
Crime and Disorder Act 1998	Defined ASB as behaviour that "caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household" (Crime and Disorder Act 1998, pg. 2). Multi-agency partnerships became compulsory and locally sensitive strategies were required to combat crime and ASB. This Act also introduced Anti-Social Behaviour Orders which came into practice April 1999.
Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001	Police provided with additional powers related to ASB and disorder, including the ability to serve on-the-spot fines for disorder or ASB, without needing to apply to court.
Police Reform Act 2002	Strengthened Anti-Social Behaviour Orders by granting the ability for the police, Local Authorities and other social housing providers to impose interim Orders whilst awaiting a court date.

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003	ASB is defined as behaviour "which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person" (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, pg. 10). Registered Social Landlords were given the ability to use injunctions, deny secure tenure and demote secure tenancies to introductory tenancies for those deemed antisocial.
Localism Act 2011	Returned powers to Local Authorities to exclude applicants from social housing waiting lists on the grounds of tenant or family member's past behaviour This Act does not re-define ASB but incorporates the Housing Act 1996, Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 definitions.
Welfare Reform Act 2012	Introduced a benefit cap, a limit to the total amount of welfare benefits a household can receive, especially impacting families with children and households living in high rental areas. This Act also saw the introduction of the Cut to the Spare Room subsidy, often dubbed the Bedroom Tax, in 2013. This meant social tenants on Housing Benefit received a financial cut to their benefits of 14% for one bedroom, or 25% for two bedrooms that were perceived as spare.
Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014	ASB is defined as: "(a) conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person; (b) conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises; or (c) conduct capable of causing housing-related nuisance or annoyance to any person" (Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014, pg. 2). This Act saw the replacement of Antisocial Behaviour Orders with Injunctions to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance.

Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016	Introduced a 1% annual reduction in social rents each year from 2016 to 2020 for which social housing providers took the resulting financial loss. This Act also introduced a further freeze in social security benefits and tax credits
Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	Placed a duty on Social Housing Providers to refer tenants at risk of homelessness to Local Authorities for advice and support to prevent homelessness, including those who subject to ASB interventions.
Social Housing White Paper 2021	Intends to introduce the ability for social tenants to buy a percentage of their home through a shared ownership scheme and to introduce Key Performance Indicators comparing social landlords on, amongst other things, performance in the management of ASB

(Table developed from Acts of Parliament and academic literature including sources: Beatty and Fothergill, 2016; Bevan, 2014; Blackmore, 2007; Burney, 2005; Dorling, 2014; Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017; Hunter, 2006; McNeill, 2014; Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021; Tunstall, 2018).

As could be assumed from the changing legislation, the management of ASB in practice has changed over time, altering and developing from the new guidance, definitions and interventions available for the different agencies involved (Brown, 2013). A key element of New Labour's enforcement of ASB legislation included a transformation of who was involved in managing behaviour. The partnership approach endorsed by New Labour blurred the boundaries of (and pluralised) responsibilities of public and private agencies to prevent crime. This was based on the idea that crime and ASB prevention was not just the responsibility of one agency, i.e., the police, but of multiple agencies working together (Crawford, 2003; Menichelli, 2020). Housing providers started gathering information on community safety and nuisance from 1994 to explore how to tackle ASB and formed the Social Landlords: Crime and Nuisance Group, now called RESOLVE (Warburton et al., 1997). Providers of social housing are required to work in partnership with tenants and other local agencies, providers and public bodies to tackle ASB and keep homes

and communities safe and clean, as well as to publish policy on how they will use these partnerships to tackle ASB (Home and Communities Agency, 2012). This partnership approach increased the number of agents involved in monitoring and disciplining ASB, including police, housing officers, community wardens, private security firms and professional witnesses (Atkinson, 2006).

Partnerships and information sharing between social landlords and the police has been deemed positive and helpful for both parties. Whilst formal information sharing agreements are often in place, their success can depend on individual officers building positive relationships with local police services (Hunter et al., 2000). On the other hand, relationships between housing providers and social services have been reported by housing officers to be less successful, with housing officers suggesting social services were not willing to share information. Perceptions of whether a family is managing issues of ASB can differ between housing and social work staff. Whilst the household may be maintaining their tenancy, parenting or family-related difficulties may continue (or vice versa), suggesting not all inter agency partnerships work equally well (Hunter et al., 2000; Scott, 2006).

2.4: Experiencing ASB interventions: perspectives of alleged perpetrators of ASB

The focus of evidence-based policy endorsed by the New Labour government appeared to be largely based on opinion and research conducted with practitioners managing ASB on what they felt worked, rather than any large-scale, national evaluation of the ethicality or efficacy of ASB interventions in England and Wales (Bannister and O'Sullivan, 2014). ASB practitioners use interventions from multiple fields, such as social work or policing, but have often not had the same level of training required to enter those fields; this could mean they are not fully aware of the implications of interventions they use (Brown, 2013).

Jones et al. (2006) argue measures to tackle ASB focus on enforcement and, to a lesser extent, prevention rather than rehabilitation. Preventative methods could include community safety measures such as increased police patrols or CCTV, the use of starter tenancies and an assessment of tenants needs in order to provide appropriate support, either directly from the housing provider or in conjunction with

other providers (Nixon and Hunter, 2001). Some preventative measures could be argued to focus on more structural explanations of ASB, with Mackenzie et al (2010) claiming they should explicitly aim to build community cohesion and trust and to tackle socioeconomic deprivation at a local level (Mackenzie et al, 2010). A clear and simple to understand tenancy agreement may also be a preventative measure, providing detailed definitions of ASB, nuisance and harassment to ensure tenants understand what is expected of them (Nixon and Hunter, 2001). However, Lister (2006) reports it cannot be assumed that tenancy agreements are comprehensibly understood by either the social housing provider or tenant, or that they will effectively manage behaviour. The extent to which individual behaviour is controlled by the tenancy agreement may depend on, amongst other factors, the level of (mis)understanding and engagement of the tenant with the agreement. However, legal action and ASB interventions rest on the assumption that tenants do fully understand the obligations and expectations placed on them. Failure to know or understand these conditions is not deemed a reasonable excuse to not meet the responsibilities or behaviours expected (Lister, 2006).

Table 2: A table to show the mix of legal/non-legal interventions for ASB

Intervention	Legal or non-legal	Supportive or punitive	Voluntary or involuntary
Home Visits	Non-legal	Arguably supportive as gathering evidence and can offer support to all parties	May be voluntary or involuntary
Warning Letter	Non-legal	Punitive	Involuntary
Housing Caution	Non-legal	Punitive	Involuntary
Mediation	Non-legal	Supportive	Voluntary
Support referrals or provision	Non-legal	Supportive	Can be voluntary or compulsory
Acceptable Behaviour Contracts or Parental Contracts	Non-legal	Punitive	Voluntary in theory, however, could feel compulsory in order to avoid court processes
Notice of Seeking Possession	Legal	Punitive	Involuntary
ASBOs and IPNAs	Legal	Punitive	Involuntary
Use of Starter Tenancies	Legal	Punitive	Involuntary
Demotion of assured tenancy	Legal	Punitive	Involuntary
(Developed from academic literature including Burney, 2005; Flint, 2018; Hunter et al., 2000; Mackenzie et al., 2010; Trotter, 2006).			

Table 2, above, shows the mix of legal and non-legal enforcement interventions related to ASB within the context of social housing, including whether the intervention might be classed as supportive or punitive and whether the intervention is voluntary or involuntary for the tenant alleged to be engaged in ASB. The table

shows that legal interventions on the whole appear to be punitive and involuntary, whereas non-legal interventions can be a mix of both voluntary and involuntary and supportive or punitive. Previous research stated that the majority of ASB reported to social landlords is resolved without legal action, with interventions such as warning letters, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and mediation generally used for low-level or first-time allegations (Hunter et al., 2000; Mackenzie et al., 2010). However, how voluntary or punitive these interventions feel in practice to alleged perpetrators could vary, particularly for the most vulnerable.

Overall, there has been limited research into the perspectives of alleged perpetrators. However, the findings of the available research identify key concerns related to the experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB, highlighting issues of limited understanding of what ASB is, a lack of appropriate investigation in to allegations of ASB, perceived inappropriate or excessive intervention, the presence of violence and a lack of support for alleged perpetrators. Good communication between social landlord and alleged perpetrator is of evident importance to ensure alleged perpetrators understand the reasons for interventions and the requirements placed on them. However, Blackmore (2007) and Brown (2011), when interviewing young people subject to Antisocial Behaviour Orders, found young people had little or no concept of what constituted ASB and were confused by their ASBOs. This lack of understanding meant they were unsure of the conditions placed on them, which could lead to breaches. Similarly, Batty et al. (2018) found poor communication led to alleged perpetrators of ASB being unsure why sanctions were imposed on them and what behavioural requirements they were expected to meet. It seems unlikely that interventions will have the intended impact on behaviour if they are not understood.

Alleged perpetrators have also repeatedly reported a lack of rigorous investigation of reports of ASB (Burney, 2005; Hunter et al., 2000; Nixon and Hunter, 2001; 2006; Scott, 2006). The lower standards of evidence required for ASB interventions (in comparison to criminal proceedings as highlighted above) perhaps influences the level of investigation practitioners undertake. Some alleged perpetrators have reported inadequate evidence collection from the landlord, who sometimes had not contacted them directly prior to legal action being commenced, and many believed

housing officers would only listen to the complainants' side of the argument (Hunter et al., 2000). Alleged perpetrators often perceived inappropriate action was taken against them, sometimes for actions they did not actually commit (Brown, 2011; Hunter et al., 2000). In Brown's (2011) study those accused of ASB reported cases of mistaken identity and fictitious events which were accepted as having occurred by agencies as the individual was previously known for being antisocial. Young people in this study felt victimised and unable to address this through formal channels due to the strong power imbalance between themselves and authority figures such as the police (Brown, 2011). The lack of evidence required for intervention into ASB due to the lower standard of proof required within civil law, has been argued to undermine the legitimacy of the interventions, particularly for young people, with young people and parents challenging the reports and subsequent behavioural changes or compliance requested of them (Crawford et al., 2017). For example, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) are often made in conjunction with individuals, especially young people, and other services such as the social landlord, police or schools (Blackmore, 2007; Flint, 2018; Nixon and Hunter, 2001). Whilst ostensibly voluntary, young people have been found to recognise, and be told by housing staff, that their parents tenancies are at risk should they not sign an ABC, implying little voluntary agreement from these young people in practice (Crawford, 2009; Goldsmith, 2008). Those subject to 'voluntary' ABCs have been found to routinely be lacking the support required to adhere to the contract, which is particularly difficult for those with learning disabilities or mental ill-health, suggesting that (as will be further discussed in Chapter 3), those with disabilities are especially negatively impacted by this form of ASB intervention (Burney, 2005). Some parents and young people have spoken of the importance of respectful treatment, with experienced practitioners appearing to understand the need to treat all parties respectfully and build interpersonal relations. This was seen as more likely to result in compliance with ABCs and any future interventions (Crawford et al., 2017). Commonly, however, interventions are perceived by alleged perpetrators as disproportionate and unfair, with low-level behaviour, such as throwing snowballs at buildings, resulting in threats of eviction for the entire household if there was future misbehaviour, something which is, of course, not an issue for home owner families (Crawford et al., 2017).

Alden (2015), when applying Lipsky's (2010) theory of street-level bureaucracy to front-line housing staff in homeless services, found service outcomes could be strongly impacted by how households were perceived by decision-making officers. Alleged perpetrators of ASB have reported that housing officers can be perceived as cold, clinical and impersonal, suggesting support from front-line staff towards alleged perpetrators of ASB may be lacking (Flint, 2018). Additionally, local housing officers have been found to actively limit their contact with tenants perceived as antisocial or areas they view as problematic, suggesting how housing officers define ASB and who they perceive as antisocial can limit the amount of support given to certain tenants or areas (Atkinson, 2006). This is important as if practitioners are not engaging meaningfully with alleged perpetrators, it seems unlikely they will recognise unmet support needs and make appropriate referrals, potentially becoming more likely to use more punitive responses (Hunter et al., 2000).

Bond-Taylor (2016) interviewed a combination of parents and young people or children, although the majority of her sample was single mothers involved in the Troubled Families Programme (alongside key workers from the project), with a focus on those whose ASB was related to untidy or unclean properties. The Troubled Families Programme was introduced following the 2011 riots to tackle apparently 'problem families' although this term is contested (Crossley, 2018a). The programme aimed to support families with multiple disadvantage or vulnerability (with referral criteria that included engagement with crime, unemployment, ASB or school truancy) through the use of a key worker holistically working with the family, although the use of a payment by results scheme could call into question how holistic the project really was (Crossley, 2018a; Flint, 2018; Hoggett and Frost, 2018). In Bond-Taylor's (2106) study, a lack of children's bedroom furniture was highlighted as a key and common issue to be resolved as early as possible. Untidiness and uncleanliness of children's, particularly teenagers', bedrooms were also commonly highlighted, with teenagers expected to agree to clean their room every day and for their mother to police this. This was argued to represent the unrealistic expectations placed on families in social housing, as many teenagers may have untidy bedrooms. Here, however, it is not a common behaviour of young people and teenagers, but ASB that needs resolving by the parent (mother). Some key workers did, however, reject the high standards of cleanliness expected for families, recognising the multiple constraints placed on

parent's time. Mothers' self-esteem was often linked to the condition of the home and a wish to maintain high standards of cleanliness and upkeep in their homes, including the need to decorate or furnish the homes. Economic and time constraints, alongside physical and mental health issues of parents and/or children, combined to make meeting their aspirations related to their home environment much more difficult to meet (Bond-Taylor, 2016).

Unsuitable housing, particularly overcrowding also contributed to reports of ASB due to untidiness or uncleanliness (Bond-Taylor, 2016). The ability of households to exercise agency in relation to housing choices was limited, particularly where they had previously experienced homelessness; any property was accepted as better than no property, meaning many were housed in properties that were inappropriate for them from as soon as they moved in. The opportunity to move from these properties, once accepted, was increasingly difficult with long housing waiting lists and a lack of appropriately sized homes. Additional issues, including reports of ASB (caused by overcrowded conditions) and rent arrears contributed to the inability of households to move to improve their living conditions. Nevertheless, Hoggett and Frost (2018), who interviewed families, managers and key workers involved in the Troubled Families Project, found the increased time and flexibility given to families was viewed positively by service users, building up trust and working around the families' other commitments. The relationship built with the key worker helped to break down isolation and families valued small actions such as encouragement and improving their self-esteem (supporting the findings of Parr, 2016). By getting to know the family and the barriers they were facing, more appropriate signposting and access to services could be provided. Service users preferred this approach to other Local Authority interventions, felt empowered to access other services and gained confidence in themselves. These qualitative results are positive, despite little quantifiable evidence as described by the government. Of course, these results should be seen in view of the wider social circumstances of the families; it is understandable that those facing persistent exclusion, isolation and stigmatisation may appreciate spending time with and building up a relationship with key workers who they trust.

A large proportion of alleged perpetrators also report being victims of ASB, and violence (within the domestic sphere, from neighbours or from welfare providers) is experienced by many (Flint, 2018; Jones et al., 2006; Nixon and Parr, 2006). This suggests the labels of victim and perpetrator may be interchangeable (Jones et al., 2006; Nixon and Parr, 2006). Flint (2018) argues that threats of both violence and symbolic violence often characterises alleged perpetrators' experiences of welfare provision. Those accused of being antisocial have reported informing their landlord or other welfare agencies of being victim to ASB or violence, however, they reported not being listened to or believed after being accused of ASB themselves. This increased feelings of marginalisation and social exclusion (Nixon and Parr, 2006). Domestic abuse is a common factor and is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, section 3.5.1.

Behaviour change is a key intention of ASB management with interventions specifically aimed at changing the behaviour of alleged perpetrators to prevent further reports of nuisance (Batty et al., 2018; Flint, 2018). The Welfare Conditionality Project (2018), which gathered interviews with perpetrators of ASB, found behaviour change often does not follow a linear path but instead includes periods of both progression and regression (Batty et al., 2018). This also rang true for young people subject to ASBOs, whose narratives described a trajectory towards compliance, despite multiple breaches (Brown, 2011). Moves towards full compliance often appeared to be linked to increased responsibility elsewhere, such as one young person who had recently become a father (Brown, 2011). Similarly, more sustained behaviour change in Batty et al.'s (2018) study was often linked to access to more secure accommodation and support services for underlying vulnerabilities. ASB interventions generally do not seem to allow for this non-linear path towards compliance. If a change of behaviour is not evident quickly enough, the perceived wishes or needs of the community or complainants of ASB seem to outweigh the need to support perpetrators and further sanction is often introduced (Brown, 2013). Crawford et al. (2017) interviewed young people and their parents after the young people had received ASB interventions such as warnings and ABCs. Whilst ABCs are ostensibly voluntary, they found that the double threat of eviction from social housing, and fear of future criminal convictions, prevented any meaningful 'voluntary' cooperation with services and with the agreement. The threat

of further sanction effectively removed choice and voice from young people and their parents in whether to sign contracts. Additionally, some parents believed they were more likely to gain access support services if they agreed to the contract, with the access to some support seen as preferable to the none that might be offered if they refused to comply. This showcases how, for some, access to support is contingent on engagement with more punitive interventions.

Eviction from social housing, arguably the strongest intervention for social landlords to use in response to ASB, has been argued to move a problem rather than resolve it and has a multitude of repercussions for the alleged perpetrator, impacting both current and future access to welfare and housing services (Deacon 2004; Dwyer, 2016; Hunter et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2006). There is some evidence of evicted households moving into private rental accommodation, often with disreputable landlords, or to other social tenancies within the same area, meaning issues are not resolved for the alleged perpetrator or victim of ASB (Hunter et al., 2000). The average financial cost of eviction for social landlords is £8,619, including arrears, repair costs, rent loss, court costs and officers' time (Campbell et al., 2016a). Wider costs of eviction include impacts on Local Authority services, Housing Benefit costs, temporary accommodation and independent advice services, increased crime rates and increased use of Accident and Emergency services. There is also evidence of severe impacts on the mental health and wellbeing of both tenants and their children and can result in family break-up, long-term housing insecurity and the development or worsening of support needs due to lack of support post-eviction (Campbell et al., 2016a).

Overall, these studies demonstrated the complex and overlapping vulnerabilities experienced by so-called troubled or antisocial families, where interconnected issues increase the challenges experienced by households to exert agency or meet conditions placed on them, suggesting focus on individual responsibility is flawed, both in relation to reason for ASB and resolution of it. However, the majority of the available research reviewed here is outside the context of social housing, often an evaluation of more supportive interventions and, whilst still important, much was conducted prior to the more recent policy and practice changes seen since the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act, 2014. Additionally, the impact of ASB

interventions on the underlying vulnerabilities of perpetrators of ASB (and particularly female and/or disabled perpetrators) remains an under researched area.

2.7: Conclusion

In conclusion, the lack of a clear definition of ASB has been a constant theme since its introduction into policy which, in turn, can make it difficult for alleged perpetrators to know what is expected of them, especially when the same behaviour can be interpreted to constitute ASB in some contexts and not in others. The political origins of ASB as a term and concept has been discussed and competing definitions of ASB have been explored, considering how these competing definitions can lead to specific challenges for the management of behaviour repeatedly seen within ASB complaints: noise and neighbour disputes. ASB policy and practice has changed over the three decades since it was first introduced, with a steady broadening of powers and an increase in agencies involved in the management of ASB. Interventions to manage ASB can be supportive or punitive, however there is limited research into how these impact on perpetrators' behaviour and vulnerability in the context of social housing. Where research does exist, the majority has been part of an evaluation of a mostly supportive project rather than the impact of punitive action. When perpetrators are interviewed, themes emerge of a lack of communication between social landlord and alleged perpetrator, a lack of investigation, perceived inappropriate or excessive intervention, a lack of positive support, and finally, a theme of violence, with many perpetrators also victims of ASB and abuse.

It is clear the lines between victim and perpetrator are often blurred, with many alleged perpetrators of ASB reporting being victims themselves but without a recourse to action as their experiences appear to be side-lined or dismissed once they are labelled antisocial. Whilst social housing providers report providing care and support for their tenants, alongside sanction, a number of studies have found that unmet support needs are a key reason for continuing ASB and, ultimately, eviction from social housing (Campbell et al., 2016a; Flint, 2018; Hunter et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2007; Nixon and Parr, 2006; Scott, 2006). Factors associated with vulnerability, including poverty, disability, gender and ethnicity and how these intersect appear to be of particular importance when exploring ASB, as disabled people, those living in poverty and women can be disproportionately subject to ASB interventions with little

recognition given to their specific support needs or the wider structural inequalities that impact on their lives. The conceptual framing of vulnerability is therefore fundamental to these debates and it is to understandings of vulnerability that the thesis now moves on to consider in more detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Vulnerability as a framework for understanding ASB interventions in social housing

The theoretical framework underpinning this research is based on a nuanced understanding of vulnerability focused in the context of social housing. This is based on the premise that understanding social housing as both supporting and providing for citizens and as a site of control can help to understand perpetrator experiences of ASB interventions (Innes, 2003; Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018). Furthermore, the varied, wide-ranging impacts of the implementation of ASB interventions and how (and why) it is differentially applied can usefully be further explored through the lens of 'vulnerability' in order to bring forward the uneven distribution and impact of interventions on ASB perpetrators. This theoretical understanding has arguably not been fully explored in relation to ASB perpetrators in previous literature.

This chapter explores the concept of vulnerability in relation to ASB interventions, with particular consideration given to how social divisions in society (including economic divisions, gender, disability and/or ethnicity) structure the lived experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB in the context of social housing welfare provision in housing. First, consideration is given to vulnerability as a core concept through which to explore experiences of ASB interventions, in particular, how this may be used in an exploration of ontological security and the home as a lens through which to explore the experiences of alleged ASB perpetrators. Next, an intersectional understanding of vulnerability is explored before attention is paid to how social tenants may be argued to be vulnerable with reference to an increased concentration of disadvantage and poverty within the social housing sector. In addition, two key social divisions which are especially significant in the lives of ASB perpetrators, gender and disability are considered as a way of drawing out difference and also inequalities in the ways in which ASB interventions play out amongst the already (arguably) vulnerable population living within social housing.

Alongside the growth in welfare conditionality (explored in Chapter 2, section 2.2), vulnerability has become an important concept in welfare practice generally and ASB policy and practice specifically, an expression perhaps of the multi-directional flows of care and control in welfare and disciplinary interventions. As touched on in

Chapter 2, the management of ASB became placed alongside safeguarding vulnerable populations within the community safety agenda of the New Labour Government and can be argued to remain there today, highlighting this key relationship between vulnerability and welfare conditionality within ASB interventions (Dobson, 2019; Menichelli, 2021). In relation to this study, it is particularly pertinent for understanding experiences of ASB perpetrators as they can often be classed as vulnerable (Crossley, 2018b; Jones et al., 2006). Broadly, the idea that the state should provide further protections for those in society who are perceived as vulnerable (through no fault of their own) is longstanding. Within social welfare provisions, vulnerability is used as an apparently neutral mechanism to allocate social housing and other resources and has been used to separate those seen as deserving of welfare from those perceived as less deserving (Carr, 2013). In terms of ASB, the concept of vulnerability first appeared prominently in terms of the needs of victims or complainants of ASB being perceived as vulnerable, particularly following the death of Fiona Pilkington and her daughter in 2007 after experiencing sustained ASB from local youths, with a need to protect these victims from further harm (Brown, 2015; Brown, 2013). The protection of vulnerable victims became entrenched in governance mechanisms in relation to ASB, with support for complainants becoming built in to social landlord ASB procedures (Brown, 2015; Brown, 2013). The concept of vulnerability is also applied to ASB perpetrators, albeit without the same rhetoric of support and protection; the terms troubled families or problem populations have increasingly been used interchangeably with the term vulnerable families, linking vulnerability with problematic behaviours (Crossley, 2017).

3.1: Understandings of vulnerability in policy and practice

How vulnerability is generally understood in policy and practice is important to understanding experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB, as how institutions perceive and understand vulnerability in relation to both complainants and perpetrators can impact service provision and how they choose to act. In contemporary Western society, vulnerability is generally seen as an individual deficiency to be overcome, with those who are perceived as vulnerable (using a normative definition of the term) therefore seen as having issues to be resolved

(Brown, 2015). Here, vulnerability may be innate (such as being a child or a pregnant woman), or related to biographical circumstances, situational difficulties or transgressions, whether this is related to structural forces and/or individual agency and choice (Brown, 2014). An example of situational vulnerability highly relevant to ASB perpetrators could include victims of domestic abuse whose situation is not through any fault of their own, however, can lead to individuals being classed as situationally vulnerable. In policy, this is often linked with the phrase 'vulnerable groups' and to ideas of victimhood. Whilst the idea that people are victims of circumstance can help alleviate perceived personal blame for their situation, behaviour or transgressions, this is also weighed up against the perceived dangerousness of the threat posed by these behaviours and those classified as vulnerable. This understanding leads to the acceptance that some people may need extra care or support, but also extra controls placed on them to control or change their behaviour (Brown, 2015). In relation to domestic abuse for example, alleged perpetrators of ASB may sometimes be associated with markers of vulnerability but also appear to be expected to change the behaviour of their abuser to prevent further complaints of ASB from their neighbours (Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Scott, 2006; further discussion of ASB perpetrators, domestic abuse and vulnerability can be found in section 3.5.1 below).

Successive governments have used the idea of vulnerability alongside a rhetoric of constrained resources to justify the financial prioritisation of welfare services for specific groups, as well as targeted disciplinary action through mechanisms such as crime and disorder reduction partnerships (Menichelli, 2021). In terms of welfare interventions, this has narrowed the number of households legitimately able to claim welfare benefits and led to the increasingly popular belief that individuals can and should overcome their vulnerabilities and move away from reliance on social welfare (Stinson, 2019). In social housing, the introduction of fixed-term tenancies came alongside a governmental effort to restructure social housing to become more residualised and appropriate for a vulnerable and marginalised population only, and even then, only for a short-term basis. Tenants should attempt to improve their circumstances and then be moved out of social housing (Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017).

Labels of vulnerability may carry a stigma and can be disempowering, eliciting images of weakness or fragility (Brown, 2014; 2015). In relation to ASB, as mentioned above, the phrase vulnerable or troubled families has been used to describe those whose behaviour has been seen as lacking and in need of change. The Troubled Families Programme (introduced in Chapter 2, section 2.4) has been argued to have increased the stigmatisation, vulnerability and hardship of families who were already experiencing multiple levels of disadvantage (Crossley, 2018b). Whilst citizens may wish to distance themselves from the term, in order to access care or support they often have to accept or promote their own classifications as vulnerable people. This, in turn, comes with forms of control and can result in a reduction of autonomy; exceptions based on vulnerability often enhance the power of service providers to make decisions for those they support (Brown, 2014; 2015; Brown, Ecclestone and Emmel, 2017; Fawcett, 2009; Harrison and Hemingway, 2014). This increased social control can increase vulnerability by hindering individuals' own coping mechanisms (see Hollomotz, 2011) and condemning behaviour seen as different as problematic or antisocial (Crossley, 2018b). The term can also be problematic as ever-growing, competing claims of vulnerability as a means to access support and resources can obscure need and divert resources away from those suffering more acute social harms (Brown et al., 2017).

Whilst support and further protections may be offered on the basis of vulnerability, this is accompanied by moralising discourse and attempted behaviour change, especially in relation to ASB reports. As highlighted in the previous chapter, if served with an IPNA, alleged perpetrators of ASB may be given a combination of requirements that condemn and ban certain behaviours whilst also requiring the individual receives (and accesses) specific support services (Edwards, 2015; Varley, 2016). However, being perceived as vulnerable can have some benefits. Those seen as vulnerable can be allocated priority need for social housing and treated differently by the criminal justice system (Brown, 2015; Menichelli, 2021). Despite some benefits, acceptance that someone is 'vulnerable' does not automatically entitle them to social welfare and enhanced support. There are still high levels of welfare conditionality and the expectation of certain responsibilities and behaviours for those deemed vulnerable, for example, with vulnerability generally not seen as a reasonable justification for behaviour that could be classed as antisocial and social

tenants previously accused of ASB excluded from social housing waiting lists regardless of current need (Brown, 2013; Dwyer, 2016; Jones et al., 2006). When vulnerable citizens are unable to meet the tacit requirements placed on them through expectations attached to vulnerability, this opens the question as to which rights will be upheld or withheld, and for whom (Brown, 2015).

Behavioural factors are important in who is deemed vulnerable, with those who are seen to 'perform vulnerability' (see Dehaghani, 2018) and appear more grateful or deferential towards services arguably more likely to be named vulnerable and therefore more likely to be given priority need for social housing and services (Brown, 2015). In practice, those who could be classified as vulnerable may still struggle to secure support where it is dependent on their behaviour and service providers' discretion. Where service providers are given discretion to allocate often scarce resources on the basis of vulnerability, this can lead to favouritism, stereotyping and stigmatisation, leaving certain groups (e.g., Black and Ethnic Minority groups, disabled people, those who identify as LGBTQ+ or women who are not perceived as meeting normative standards of femininity and behaviour) at increased likelihood of exclusion (Madden and Marcuse, 2016). Those presenting challenging or problematic behaviour, rather than appearing simply grateful, fall less neatly in the category of vulnerable or victim and are more often seen as deviant, showing agency and therefore responsible for their behaviour. They are subsequently less likely to be awarded the protections and support potentially available to them. Alternatively, while support may be offered, this may come at the cost of harsher sanctions or punishments (Brown, 2014; 2015). This means that social tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB are less likely to be perceived as vulnerable as their behaviour is viewed as problematic (Dobson, 2019). Even where there is recognition that some alleged perpetrators who could be classed as vulnerable may not be able to fully control, or understand the impact of, their behaviour, they are still generally viewed as having some level of rational choice and responsibility for ASB (Brown, 2013).

3.2: Alternate understandings of vulnerability

As Brown's (2015) wider work on vulnerability in social policy and disciplinary interventions has indicated, a normative use of the concept of vulnerability can

individualise problems (Brown, 2013; Brown, 2015). Importantly, vulnerability is not a neutral term and there are multiple understandings of it, opening up possibilities that more progressive approaches could provide opportunity for understanding and shaping interventions in fields such as social housing and ASB (Carr, 2013; Gilson, 2016b). To give a sense of the broad range of approaches to the notion, vulnerability can be viewed as innate or natural, related to physical or personal factors often associated with different parts of the life course such as childhood, old age or physical sensory impairment and/or periods of mental ill-health (Brown, 2014; 2015). It can also be related to social and structural disadvantage, the environment and geographical space (Watts and Bohle, 1993; Emmel and Hughes, 2010). Watts and Bohle (1993) suggest vulnerability is a risk of exposure to crisis alongside inadequate resources to manage crises and the severe consequences which follow as a result. Emmel and Hughes (2010) adapted and modernised this work, arguing vulnerability (in relation to poverty and disadvantage) could be viewed as material shortages and limited resources for basic needs, a lack of capacity to address needs or plan for the future and uncertain reliance on welfare services to address crises when they happen. For them, a key part of vulnerability was related to living in fear of future crises, an aspect which is highly relevant when considering the recent coronavirus crisis (Emmel and Hughes, 2010; Vilenica et al., 2020). Social housing tenants in general, and ASB perpetrators in particular, often experience multiple disadvantage, including poverty, poor housing conditions and experiences of violence, highlighting how they may be especially at risk of exposure to crisis, alongside reduced capacity to manage crises when they come (Cheshire and Bulgar, 2015; Emmel and Hughes, 2010; Flint, 2018; Jones et al., 2006); perhaps in part why ASB has become one of the areas where vulnerability as taken root as a prism through which to view the experiences of those subject to interventions.

However, vulnerability can also be viewed as a characteristic simply of existence, in that every person is always at risk of illness, injury or other harm such as economic, institutional or social harms or disruptions; vulnerability is simply universal (Fineman, 2013; Brown, 2015; Carr, 2013). With this understanding of vulnerability, rather than focusing resources on those deemed vulnerable due to specific characteristics, societal institutions should protect all citizens and provide opportunities to building resilience, skills, resources and capabilities to protect against vulnerability and crisis

(Fineman, 2013; Carr, 2013). By accepting vulnerability as innate and universal, this can help counteract negative connotations of dependency, specifically welfare dependency, as here, dependency is not deviant but is both natural and inevitable (Fineman, 2013; Carr, 2013). When vulnerability is understood as universal, lived experiences can show that vulnerability can simultaneously be understood as varied and unique for individuals (see section 3.4 below). This may include differences in human embodiment or constructed related to individual experiences of the social world, considering individuals' positions and relationships with institutions, other people and their geography (Fineman, 2013).

According to Fineman's (2013) view of vulnerability as universal, institutions can increase vulnerability by preventing access to resources, goods and services or can ameliorate (to an extent) vulnerability by supporting, providing resources and compensating for vulnerability. Whilst not removing vulnerability completely, it is possible to increase the assets and coping mechanisms available for those who could be classed as vulnerable. The actions of different institutions interact with each other, making their actions cumulative with relation to either increasing or reducing vulnerability (Fineman, 2013). However, Fineman's (2013) universal vulnerability has been criticised for situating vulnerability and autonomy as oppositional, suggesting the state needs to provide protections for vulnerable people and therefore potentially leading to the introduction of paternalist policies that can disempower citizens (Butler, 2016; Mackenzie, 2013). Instead, it could be argued that we should not view vulnerability and empowerment as necessarily oppositional; the state can still intervene to support people who could be classed as vulnerable whilst also promoting autonomy in order to empower citizens to fully engage within a democratic society (Mackenzie, 2013). For alleged perpetrators living within social housing, this could mean supporting these tenants to remain in their social housing homes and helping them to avoid further ASB interventions that could threaten their security of tenure.

3.3: Vulnerability and ontological security

Ontological security might usefully be understood as a key component of vulnerability and is particularly relevant in relation to this study, set within the context of ASB interventions in social housing. Ontological security can be defined as

feelings of confidence in the social order and in an individual's place in society, as well as the right to be one's self (Hiscock et al., 2001; Stonehouse, et al., 2020). Carr (2013), a theorist on both vulnerability and housing, argues housing and vulnerability are linked, with access to secure housing a mechanism for reducing vulnerability, and insecure housing as a potential to increase levels of vulnerability. She claims that access to affordable home ownership and secure tenancies within social housing can temper the risks of economic recessions, increasing security for citizens and therefore, reducing vulnerability. The concept of ontological security is strongly linked to housing and the concept of home, where individuals feel in control of their environment, free to be themselves, construct their own identities and be free from surveillance (Hiscock et al., 2001; Saunders, 1990; Stonehouse et al., 2020; Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2016). The concept of home is, however, contested, with definitions of home changing depending on context, time, place and individual understandings. The home is not neutral, but instead is intensely personal, meaning we carry our own assumptions and understandings of home with us, including as researchers interested in housing (Meers, 2021). Whilst the home is often linked to positive connotations of security and safety (as referred to within the concept of ontological security), it may also have negative connotations, with the home not always a safe space for some citizens, particularly women (Kreiczer-Levy, 2014). Carr, Edgeworth and Hunter (2018) highlighted how, despite the home sometimes being a place of repression rather than freedom to be oneself, 'home' may be a place in the past or an aspiration for the future, meaning it is more than a physical space that someone lives in. Access to a secure home, where individuals feel a sense of being 'at home' and a sense of ontological security, can usefully be viewed as something that can mitigate or exacerbate vulnerability (Carr et al., 2018).

Government policy, particularly from 2010 onwards, has focused on supporting home ownership rather than improving access to or affordability of social or private rental accommodation, arguably helping those who are relatively better off increase their feelings of ontological security whilst reducing housing benefits (including the housing element of Universal Credit) and other support for low-income renters (Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017; Tunstall, 2018). There have been significant reductions in government spending in housing over recent decades. The Department for Communities and Local Government capital expenditure to build social and

affordable homes dropped by 54% from 2009/10 to 2014/15; (social) housing provision has been placed under the greatest financial pressure, after adult social care (Tunstall, 2018). A more general reduction in welfare benefits was also introduced in this time (Crossley, 2017; 2018b). The subsequent Welfare Reform Acts of 2012 and 2016 significantly impacted social housing tenants, with the hardest costs faced by families with dependent children, including lone parents, increasing vulnerability by significantly reducing incomes (Beatty and Fothergill, 2016). The greatest financial losses were seen in the social housing sector and working-age social tenants (Beatty and Fothergill, 2016). The increased pressure on social housing provision looks unlikely to change, as in 2015 the government announced further plans for the enforced sale of high-value council housing and an expansion of the Right to Buy policy, although full details of this have not emerged (Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017). The newest Social Housing White Paper (2021), however, reinforces the intended continuation of the Right to Buy and introduces the Right to Shared Ownership, providing some social tenants the right to buy a percentage (possibly as low as 10%) of their home (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021). Further, large increases in the use of benefit sanctions have significantly increased hardship and pushed people off benefits, towards Food Banks, crime and payday lenders.

Whilst social housing appears to be increasingly focused on the most vulnerable and those seen as most in need, austerity policies and welfare reform may make social housing unaffordable for some low-income households. Additionally, social landlords are reportedly becoming more averse to housing families who are solely reliant on welfare benefits (Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017). Some social landlords are also more reluctant to provide tenancies to those with complex support needs or multiple vulnerabilities, previous (or current) allegations of ASB or a poor rent payment history, with tenants who have (or formerly have had) rent arrears facing barriers to both private and social rented sector tenancies (McNeill, 2014). The Cut to the Spare Room Subsidy, colloquially dubbed the 'Bedroom Tax', introduced in the Welfare Reform Act of 2012 further exacerbated issues of affordability and negatively impacted tenants' ontological security, with cuts to housing benefit introduced for tenants perceived as having a spare room (Beatty and Fothergill, 2016; Dorling,

2014). Overall, the welfare reforms post-2010 have significantly increased the vulnerability of, and hardship experienced by, social housing tenants.

Additionally, the security of tenure offered to social housing tenants has been reduced over time; the Localism Act 2011 introduced fixed term tenancies for social housing in England, based on the argument that social housing provision is a scarce resource for those in need that should be available on a temporary basis rather than a permanent home as the former security of social housing tenure previously implied (Fitzpatrick and Pawson, 2014). Although take up of fixed term tenure by social housing providers was lower than expected, approximately two thirds of new social housing tenancies are now probationary tenancies (introduced in the Housing Act 1996), making it easier for social landlords to evict tenants for ASB within the first year of their tenancy (Dwyer, 2004a; Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017). When feelings of ontological security are negatively impacted through disorder or insecurity (as promoted by the 'Bedroom Tax', fixed term tenancies or threats of eviction from ASB interventions), this can lead to an internal crisis of the self, impacting how the self, other people and objects are perceived (Giddens, 1991). Therefore, individuals develop a framework of ontological security through which they navigate the social world (Giddens, 1991). Linking this to home ownership, but also to long-term renting which could be offered in social housing, ontological security, housing and feeling at home (in the more positive understanding of the concept) has been linked to positive physical and mental health outcomes, suggesting it is important for individual wellbeing (Fitzpatrick and Pawson, 2014; Hiscock et al., 2001; Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2016). This means that housing (and social housing) represents more than just shelter, but also a place within which to build stability and a feeling of personal safety (Madden and Marcuse, 2016), which could be considered an important aspect of how vulnerability is experienced in the context of ASB perpetrators in social housing.

Whilst the home and the right to a home has generally been seen as a secure right for citizens living in Western countries, insecure housing has always been evident for some populations. Carr et al. (2018) argue that despite this, there is evidence of housing insecurity increasing over time from the 1980s, following de-regulation of housing and labour markets and changes to welfare provisions. Institutions, and how they provide and manage welfare provisions, can impact security and insecurity and

so, therefore, vulnerability, linking back to Emmel and Hughes' (2010) view of vulnerability as a risk of exposure to crises. Increased welfare conditionality alongside increased restrictions to accessing welfare has increased insecurity for more vulnerable citizens (Carr et al., 2018). If we view the actions of these welfare institutions cumulatively, as argued by Fineman (2013), we can see that changes to welfare in terms of income and access to and retention of social housing may lead to a reduction in ontological security. This reduction of ontological security may negatively impact a tenant's health and wellbeing, meaning that brought together, the actions of institutions can have a cumulative negative impact on a tenant's levels of vulnerability by interacting with other disadvantages and challenges experienced by the tenant.

In social housing, the relatively secure tenancy (in comparison to private rented tenancies) formerly offered to social tenants, and leading to higher levels of ontological security, is argued to be highly valued by tenants and sought after by those seeking social housing, although ASB policy and practice and the wider welfare reforms discussed above have reduced this security for many (Fitzpatrick and Pawson, 2014; Robinson and Walshaw, 2014). Alongside the introduction of ASB policy and practice, Carr (2013) states there was an easy acceptance of the idea that so-called antisocial tenants had too many protections to help them stay in their home, leading to debate relating to the security of the social housing tenure in general. Using Fineman's (2013) use of vulnerability as a natural and universal state, Carr (2013) argues that whilst security of tenure within social housing was criticised for protecting people from market risks that other citizens may face, secure and lifelong tenancies could instead be reconfigured as an asset of multiple dimensions, offering security to tenants where there is a lack of other housing assets for many vulnerable citizens to draw upon. The increased rights of social landlords to end social tenancies for ASB and to use fixed term or probationary tenancies can reduce the ontological security of the tenant, with increased fear they may lose their home (Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017). ASB interventions are often framed as being introduced to protect the right for all citizens to enjoy a strong sense of ontological security in their homes, although the ontological security of citizens complaining about ASB appears to be given priority over the reduced security of tenure and ontological security of those alleged to be perpetrating ASB (Carr, 2010). As

vulnerability has here been outlined to be impacted by ontological security, this is an important lens through which to explore the experiences of ASB perpetrators whose vulnerability may be increased as result of ASB interventions which negatively impact their ontological security.

3.4: Social divisions and vulnerability: an intersectional approach

Building on the universal approach to vulnerability as a useful starting point for challenging the current, more normative understandings of vulnerability generally seen in ASB policy and practice (outlined above), a more intersectional approach to vulnerability could offer a deeper insight into the differential experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB. There is a risk with universal understandings of vulnerability that vulnerable groups can be homogenised, ignoring how different intersecting social divisions or individual characteristics might impact vulnerability. An intersectional approach, which includes consideration given to different and overlapping social identities, divisions and circumstances, is arguably needed to better understand individual differences in experiences of vulnerability more generally (Kuran et al., 2020) and, as this thesis argues, ASB interventions more specifically.

Whilst acknowledging that all might be potentially vulnerable, it is important to recognise the structural divisions that underline inequality and individual experiences, meaning some groups are more vulnerable than others due to oppression and societal harms, for example gender inequality in society, racism and ableism (Cole, 2016). When considering ASB perpetrators, it could be argued that all ASB perpetrators within social housing may be classed as vulnerable, however, social divisions such as gender and disability can increase vulnerability, particularly when combined with other understandings of vulnerability such as situational vulnerability and an increased risk of exposure to crises. Rather than a simple, normative understanding of vulnerability as an issue to be resolved, vulnerability can be a useful conceptual framework through which to understand and challenge systemic inequalities and foster resistance to the status quo. Although, any operationalisation of vulnerability needs to consider nuance within and across individuals and groups to do this effectively, which is not always easy (Butler, 2016; Cole, 2016).

Gender and disability are particularly important social divisions through which to explore the impact of ASB interventions on alleged perpetrators, as women and disabled people appear to be at risk of increased sanction for behaviour that is often outside of their control, for example, the behaviour of other household members or behaviour that is related to their disability (Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Scott, 2006; Krayer et al., 2018; Parr, 2009). However, it can feel uncomfortable to suggest that women and/or disabled people are automatically vulnerable, particularly as there is, of course difference and overlap within these identities. Butler et al. (2016, pg. 2) acknowledge this difficulty, stating, "There is always something both risky and true in claiming that women or other socially disadvantaged groups are especially vulnerable." If gender or disability is perceived as a vulnerability it can suggest that non-male or disabled people are inherently an 'other' and/or 'lesser' population, contravening decades of activism by marginalised groups to avoid this status of 'less than' others (Ecclestone and Godley, 2014). However, pointing out that vulnerability exists does not mean that these groups are necessarily 'lesser' than men and able-bodied people, and there are differences in understanding and experiences of vulnerabilities within and between these social divisions (Butler et al., 2016; Gilson, 2016a). Considering these groups as potentially vulnerable can be an opportunity to recognise social inequality and acknowledge society's responsibility for dealing with this. Vulnerability, like (dis)ability, does not necessarily have to have negative connotations and can instead advance a recognition of difference and otherness that structure lived experiences of the social world (Ecclestone and Godley, 2014). An intersectional understanding of both social identities (including social divisions) and vulnerability is useful to understand the complex, interlinking elements of individual experiences and positioning in the social world, alongside institutional influences, to understand levels and experiences of vulnerability. This means vulnerability can be a framework to help understand experiences of different groups in society, however, social identities are not enough on their own to make someone vulnerable. Vulnerability is differentially distributed, with this differentiation impacted by legacies of oppression, policy choices and changes, material dimensions and institutional influences (Gilson, 2016a).

Overall, vulnerability can be usefully mobilised as a concept which can bring into focus multiple overlapping power structures, institutional forces, inequalities,

contexts and individual capabilities, meaning an intersectional approach can help us to understand individual differences within group identities (Kuran et al., 2020). Whilst accepting that the definition of vulnerability is contested (Brown, 2014; 2015, Carr, 2013), the definition of vulnerability developed and applied in this thesis draws on the work of Brown (2019) and the theorists critically discussed above and combines the lived experiences of individual, structural and situational vulnerability. Individuals' lived experiences of vulnerability are understood as shaped by social insecurity or harm through a combination of structural inequalities and social divisions, biological fragility, institutional forces and the individual's understanding, choices and experiences as a social actor (Brown, 2019, pg. 627). The intersectional perspective used here challenges the normative approach to vulnerability generally seen in policy and practice and shows how this theory could be used to provide better, more nuanced and appropriate support for people who could be classed as vulnerable (Kuran et al., 2020).

3.5: Vulnerability, social housing and support

Social housing providers are operating in an increasingly complex environment. Policy from the 1970s onwards aimed at limiting the size and scope of social housing, leading to the residualisation of the tenure. Large stock transfers from Local Authorities to private housing associations meant that where formerly, an area would have one large provider of social housing (normally the Locally Authority) there are now a diverse range of organisations and provisions, both in terms of the type of provider (Local Authority, charitable or private organisation) and tenure (Ward et al., 2010). The 1980s Right to Buy policy, which allowed relatively wealthy tenants to buy their homes at a heavily discounted price, led to the significant privatisation of swathes of higher quality houses in relatively attractive areas and reduced the social diversity of the tenure (Atkinson, 2006; Burney, 2005; Dorling, 2014; Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017). Many former social housing estates are now mixed tenure as a result of the Right to Buy (Burney, 2005; Pawson and McKenzie, 2006).

Despite social housing being viewed as a popular tenure in the post-war period, the privatisation, residualisation and problematisation of social housing by successive governments has resulted in social housing providing homes to those with the least choice (in terms of housing) and the fewest financial and social resources (Rhodes

and Mullins, 2009). Social housing provision has shifted towards housing the poorest, most disadvantaged or vulnerable populations and is broadly viewed as a safety-net for low-income households (Carr and Cowan, 2006; Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017; McNeill, 2014). Social housing is often accessed through long waiting lists and allocated with points-based systems determining who is and who is not entitled to housing (McNeill, 2014). Whilst choice-based lettings systems are also in place, allowing potential tenants to choose to apply for accommodation deemed appropriate to their needs, these are often alongside points-based priorities and the ability of tenants to actually make a 'choice' about where they live could be questioned (Bond-Taylor, 2016; McNeill, 2014). As discussed above, the normative notion of vulnerability has been used by successive governments alongside the rhetoric of constrained resources to justify the prioritisation of welfare services to certain groups, narrowing the number of people who can access social welfare provisions, including social housing (Stinson, 2019).

ASB has consistently been linked to social housing tenants and areas of social housing. The residualisation of social housing stock can be argued to have led to increased vulnerability amongst social housing tenants, with problems of nuisance behaviour and crime becoming increasingly concentrated, but also more noticeable as it is taken place in 'managed' housing; ASB could be argued to be found or managed in social housing because it is a tenure that is regularly monitored, with officers dedicated to combatting ASB (Carr and Cowan, 2006; Crawford and Flint, 2009). Nevertheless, within social housing estates, there is a concentration of disadvantage, with the most vulnerable and those with the most challenging behaviours housed close together (Millie, 2007). Social housing estates, other deprived residential areas and city or town centres have been argued to generally be areas where ASB is more likely to be a problem for people. However, whilst serious ASB may occur here, much may also be behaviour that, whilst possible to see as different, challenging or unusual, is mislabelled as antisocial due to the broad array of behaviours that can be defined as ASB, for example, behaviour of those with mental ill health or teenagers with limited recreational opportunities being present in public spaces; this is particularly an issue in social housing where vulnerable people with arguably more challenging behaviours are now more likely to be housed and where there is less likely to be recreational opportunities (Carr and Cowan, 2006;

Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017; McNeill, 2014; Millie 2007; Tyler, 2013, se Chapter 2, section 2.2).

This means that social housing is an arena where specific interventions have been introduced for ASB, with social housing an area where poverty, vulnerability and ASB are seen to coalesce, alongside being an area where technologies of control are both possible and seen as necessary (Crawford, 2009). Social housing has not only been targeted but, notably, was also seen as willing to manage complaints of ASB in their properties, with social housing providers generally embracing their increased role in the management of their tenants' behaviour (Bannister and O'Sullivan, 2014; Crawford and Flint, 2009). It is therefore social landlords who are repeatedly used to roll-out ASB interventions and providers are consequently heavily involved in ASB management (Atkinson, 2006; Burney, 2005; Flint, 2018). That being said, this link between social housing and ASB has not gone uncontested, with many commentators suggesting that ASB legislation is another method of condemning and controlling the behaviour of the more vulnerable population found within social housing (Carr and Cowan, 2006). Overall, this suggests that the people who are most likely to be perceived as antisocial, and who are increasingly viewed as responsible for resolving ASB, are those in impoverished areas (often social housing estates) who are already facing multiple levels of exclusion and deprivation and therefore could be classed as vulnerable. As the residualisation of social housing can be argued to create and/or compound issues of ASB, responding to these issues with a punitive, enforcement led approach could be seen as an unfair, or even irrational response, managing symptoms of underlying issues without addressing the root cause (Squires, 2006).

Whilst social housing has thus far been shown in a predominantly controlling light, with a focus on the management of the behaviour of those living within social housing, it is also relevant that a tradition of care and support is a key characteristic of social housing. Power and Bergen (2018) argue that despite reduced incomes within the social housing sector, the provision of care is still held as a core value for social housing providers. In fact, Dobson (2019) argues that the rhetoric of care for tenants perceived as having multiple vulnerabilities appears to have intensified, identifying this as a new arena in which contestations of 'deservingness' and blame

play out. However, where a vulnerable tenant's behaviour is perceived as problematic, such as behaviour resulting in a complaint of ASB, this care and support is likely to be provided alongside sanction (Dobson, 2019). Those reported as antisocial can be mandated to engage with support services through the use of court orders or threat of other legal sanction in order to retain access to welfare or housing provisions, with repercussions should they fail to comply (Brown, 2013; Flint, 2018; Trotter, 2006). This suggests, similar to the findings of Crawford et al. (2017), that alleged perpetrators may be pressured to sign 'voluntary' agreements, 'antisocial' tenants can be coerced into engaging with support services they otherwise would not have chosen to access, although alleged perpetrators of ASB are often unaware that engagement with support is mandatory (Batty et al., 2018; Flint, 2018). In more recent years, following cuts to services from austerity policies, vulnerability and a need to support and/or manage those perceived as having complex and overlapping vulnerabilities has been used by practitioners to develop stronger cross-agency partnerships and foster joint resources, with the explicit intention of reducing costs for practitioners managing ASB and community safety more broadly (Menichelli, 2021).

However, not all tenants are referred to support, despite support being seen as a key element of ASB management and social housing provision (Brown, 2013; Dobson, 2019; Power and Bergen, 2018). Failure to refer to support services is perceived to result in inappropriate interventions being used against alleged perpetrators (Hunter et al., 2000). Many referred to rehabilitation projects for ASB have high support needs that were not being met, including domestic abuse or mental ill-health (Nixon and Parr, 2006). For example, those working with Shelter's Inclusion Project disproportionately suffered from social and economic exclusion, ill-health and other unmet support needs which increased their vulnerability (Shelter, 2007). Jones et al. (2006) used multiple methods, including monitoring referrals, interviewing service users and stakeholders and tracking cases to evaluate the Shelter Inclusion Project, a three-year pilot introduced in 2002 by Shelter and Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council to tackle ASB and social exclusion. The Project provided support to households at risk of homelessness to reduce levels of ASB. Criteria for referrals included living in the area, a history of ASB and a wish to be supported by the project, which suggests engagement was not mandatory (Shelter, 2007). Support

included help with managing money and debts, practical help around the home such as garden or property maintenance, advocacy, support with parenting skills and help to manage stress and depression. Referrals were also made to external support services for mental ill-health and drug or alcohol services. Service users were generally positive about the project and reported feeling more listened to by their landlord if a support worker was present. The workers appeared to adopt a 'what works' approach, with no training provided for staff who, instead, developed their own strategies over time, which suggests both a level of flexibility and inconsistency (Jones et al., 2006). Service users felt the project had a significantly positive impact on their lives and that it had prevented eviction. Many subsequently felt more in control of their own lives and better able to manage debt. The Project was viewed as good value for money due to a reduction in households losing their home and longer-term improvements in efforts to reduce social exclusion, unemployment and education underachievement. In Shelter's (2007) five-year review of the project, they reported 91% of households supported by the project received no more allegations of ASB against them after support had ceased and 86% stayed in the same home for at least two years. What this suggests is that support can be argued to be important for the reduction of ASB and retention of social housing, however, it is not necessarily provided to alleged perpetrators of ASB consistently or prior to ASB-led evictions, even where there are clear vulnerabilities.

This section has identified how social housing tenants can be perceived as increasingly vulnerable over time, in large part due to a residualisation of social housing and cuts to welfare provisions. This vulnerability can lead to an increased likelihood of both experiencing and being alleged to be engaged in ASB but does not necessarily result in increased levels of support. Whilst keeping in mind the importance of an intersectional approach to vulnerability and understanding alleged perpetrator experiences of ASB intervention, gender and disability have been found to be two social divisions that appear especially significant in relation to experiences of ASB; these are now discussed in the next two sections.

3.5.1: Vulnerability, gender and ASB in social housing

Keeping in mind an intersectional lens, it remains relevant to consider the importance of gender in relation to ASB, housing, social welfare and vulnerability,

particularly as there is evidence of a gendered element to ASB, with women especially vulnerable to losing their homes for ASB caused by their (male) partners, children and visitors (Carr, 2010; Jones et al., 2006; Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Nison and Hunter, 2009). Whilst government discourse on vulnerability does not explicitly focus on gender, women and girls are often more likely to be classified as vulnerable in comparison to their male counterparts. In a society where women are marginalised, controlled and subject to violence, women's lived experiences of vulnerability are different from men, and how gender intersects with ethnicity, disability, age and social class is likewise vital to understanding these experiences (Brown, Ellis and Smith, 2021; Cole, 2016). For women, welfare conditionality experienced in their houses is compounded by the longstanding form of oppression the home represents as a site of unpaid domestic labour and patriarchal control (Madden and Marcuse, 2016). The welfare state as a whole is arguably more oppressive for women than men, reinforcing women's dependence on both men and the state (McIntosh, 2000). Welfare benefits calculated by household income and paid to men in the household reinforces women's dependence on male partners. Whilst Child Tax Credits used to be paid directly to women as a matter of course, giving women some income independent of male partners on top of Child Benefit payments (McIntosh, 2000), under Universal Credit, this payment has now been subsumed within one household payment (Welfare Reform Act 2012). Within such joint claims for Universal Credit a woman may also face reduced income if her partner is sanctioned because of noncompliance with mandatory work related activity (Stinson, 2019). Additionally, the majority of social tenant households are female headed, possibly due to women having, on average, lower incomes than men and more likely to experience statutory homelessness (Burney, 2005; Tunstall, 2018). Importantly, women already face additional forms of control within the home, including domestic abuse. Particularly important in relation to ASB and housing, domestic abuse, linked to ongoing patriarchy within wider society, is a significant factor that increases women's vulnerability. Violence within relationships reinforces men's privileged position and places women as subordinates (Botein and Hetling, 2016). For the purpose of this thesis, domestic abuse is defined as an intentional pattern of behaviour where control and power over a partner is maintained, including emotional, physical, sexual and financial abuse. While abuse from women towards men and within same-sex couples does happen, this conduct most often manifests

through men dominating individual female partners, arguably as the domination of women by men is seen as morally acceptable in many societies (Botein and Hetling, 2016; Friedman, 2013). Additionally, men have been argued to be generally stronger, bigger and more likely to be aggressive than women (Friedman, 2013).

Women experiencing abuse are not only at risk of physical, emotional or psychological harm, but also of coercion that may impact their moral agency, making them act in a way that they may not have otherwise done, making this especially salient in relation to the responsibility for ASB taking place in social housing properties (Freidman, 2013). The impacts of abuse are wide-ranging and well documented, including negative physical and mental health outcomes, poverty, reduced support networks, negative impacts on work and education and impacts on children who are at increased risk of child abuse as well as future behavioural and emotional problems. Especially prevalent for women is the impact of abuse on mental health, including depression, anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Austin, 2020; Botein and Hetling, 2016). Access to resources and support from others is vital for women to successfully leave abusers (Yamawaki et al., 2012). Many women are forced to leave their home as a result of domestic abuse (rather than their abusers leaving the home), often leading to chronic housing instability and a significant reduction in feelings of ontological security (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2016). Despite acceptance that those experiencing or who have experienced domestic abuse may be vulnerable and in need of support, there are a number of barriers to accessing support, accessing women's refuges and cooperating with services. These barriers include mental ill-health, disability, lack of English language, lack of access to public funds, financial hardship, care for children and alcohol or substance misuse (Yamawaki et al., 2012). The nature of the relationship with their abuser means victims are often emotionally and financially tied with the perpetrator and may also have children together, making it harder for victims to work with services. Whilst the increased vulnerability of women experiencing domestic abuse could potentially lead to support from social housing providers and other services, survivors of domestic abuse are often not seen as "ideal victims" due to being perceived as uncooperative with services (Meyer, 2016, pg. 76).

Access to housing support for victims of domestic abuse is especially difficult, with austerity policies in many countries, including the UK, significantly reducing the support for those facing violence in the home (Austin, 2020; Vilenica et al., 2020). Under the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, housing options teams have a duty to support and assist those fleeing domestic abuse. The new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduces further duties on Local Authorities to deliver accommodation-based support to victims and to safeguard security of tenure for social housing secure tenants who are victims of domestic abuse (Austin, 2020; Domestic Abuse Act, 2021; Housing Act 1996; Homelessness Act 2002; Homelessness Reduction Act 2017). There is also recognition of the needs of victims of domestic abuse under the rules of Universal Credit, meaning victims are able to access additional support and make new claims separate from their partner (Department for Work and Pensions, 2020). However, routinely, there is a failure of housing services to recognise the needs and circumstances of victims of domestic violence against a backdrop of limited supply and increasing demand for housing and housing support.

The discretion of individual housing providers and individual front-line staff can mean that even where an individual appears to be eligible for alternate housing as a result of fleeing violence, they may still be overlooked as not eligible for priority need, suggesting this aspect of vulnerability is often overlooked (Austin, 2020; Dwyer et al., 2015). Victims may be prevented from making a valid homelessness application due to housing professionals ignoring guidance which allows victims of domestic abuse to apply to any Local Authority for support, staff recommending women to return to the abuser and inconsistent assessments of priority need for housing. Therefore, the duty to support victims of domestic abuse is often not met (Austin, 2020). With steep increases in cases of domestic abuse against women, as well as transphobic, homophobic and ableist abuse during the Covid-19 pandemic, whether this duty will be better met with the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 remains to be seen (Domestic Abuse Act 2021; Vilenica et al., 2020).

The belief that women could choose to leave their abusers if they wished, and the lack of understanding as to why women may stay in abusive relationships can lead to victims of domestic violence being seen as deviant, antisocial and at least partly

responsible for, or complicit in, future victimisation (Meyer, 2016). In the context of housing and ASB, responsibility to end abusive relationships is often placed on the victim rather than the perpetrator, assuming they have the knowledge and resources available to prevent further abusive behaviour. These assumptions place a level of blame on the victim for not preventing the abuse and demonises them if they are not seen to be ending the relationship soon enough (Botein and Hetling, 2016; Dwyer et al., 2015; Meyer, 2016). The perceived *ir*responsibility of victims of violence in not preventing abuse can lead to services withdrawing support, or, in the case of housing support, preventing support beginning, with access to housing used as a means to discipline individuals and change their behaviour, placing additional conditions on these women before allowing them to apply for housing (Dwyer et al., 2015; Yamawaki et al., 2012). Victims of domestic abuse have reported feeling they had to prove themselves as worthy of empathy and support from support services, feeling they were wasting the time of professionals supporting them and who saw them as contributing to their own abuse (Meyer, 2016). Support was generally withdrawn by professional services, including the police, as well as wider familial support if victims returned to the partner, leading to feelings of blame, guilt and worthlessness (Meyer, 2016). This is at odds with the advice of some housing options workers who told victims to return to their violent partner rather than help them apply for alternate housing (Austin, 2020).

This apparent symbolic violence (see Flint, 2018) of preventing access to social housing and support, enacted by professionals who perceive victims of violence as responsible for their own abuse ignores wider structural barriers and personal risks that increase the vulnerability of victims leaving relationships, including further violence and death and, ultimately, can lengthen the time the victim remains in the abusive relationship (Meyer, 2016; Yamawaki et al., 2012). In relation to ASB and social housing specifically, Hunter and Nixon (2001) investigated social housing possession cases by analysing the type of cases that went to court for possession of the property and the court of appeal for ASB-led eviction, gathering court transcripts, interviewing an ASB officer and interviewing female tenants against whom action was taken. The majority of complaints were made against families with children, especially single mothers, however, unlike in cases without a female-headed household, complaints were more likely to be raised about predominantly male

visitors or children at the property rather than the tenant themselves. This was most commonly related to male teenage sons or violent, disruptive male partners. Outright or suspended possession was more likely to be granted against female defendants and less likely to be overturned in an appeal, with women held responsible for being a victim of domestic abuse due to being unable to control the male's behaviour.

Nixon and Hunter (2009) repeated this investigation into ASB possession applications and appeals between 2001-07. They found women were still at risk of losing their home because of the behaviour of male partners and children rather than their own behaviour. In none of the cases reviewed was a woman's own behaviour deemed as at fault indicating, again, that women are vulnerable to being punished for the behaviour of male visitors or household members. When interviewed, women reported being victims of domestic abuse, asking their male partner to leave and still being subjected to ASB interventions for his behaviour. They also reported being a victim of violence and abuse from teenage sons. When a court accepted the tenant was a victim of abuse and in need of protection, the needs of the immediate neighbours often took priority, with the experiences of women dismissed. Abuse was viewed as a peripheral issue rather than the cause of ASB, despite women often feeling powerless to prevent it.

In court, women were expected to show remorse for ASB in order to prevent eviction, which is difficult when women feel victimised and singled out for behaviour they themselves did not commit. Nixon and Hunter (2009) point out that single mothers, who may have escaped abusive patriarchy within their own household are subject to further patriarchal structures and practices that continue to oppress them with punitive interventions. Whilst male tenants may also be expected to show remorse for their behaviour, it is only females who are required to be remorseful for the behaviour of others (Nixon and Hunter, 2009). Similarly, Scott's (2006) evaluation of the Dundee Families Project found over half the women referred to the project had experienced domestic abuse. As tenants are held responsible for visitors' or family members' behaviour through clauses related to ASB in their tenancy agreements, they are seen as allowing breaches in tenancy if they fail to prevent the ASB. However, one could question whether a victim of abuse can be seen as 'allowing' the breach. Even when mothers were viewed as trying to prevent the

behaviour of her children, it was generally still deemed reasonable to evict them for being seen as failing to manage.

Abusive and/or controlling (male) partners was also a common factor in Bond-Taylor's (2016) study that made it harder for mothers to engage with services and meet the requirements expected of her. Control over her behaviour (including the ability to clean or decorate the property) and control over household funds by male partners, and the gendered nature of housework reinforced in these homes made it particularly difficult for women who faced the largest burden to meet the cleanliness and upkeep requirements of their social landlords and other services. Expectations of service providers that women manage the behaviour of others in her home, including engagement with new cleaning rotas, placed women at risk of violence or aggression from both partners and their children, particularly where domestic abuse already occurred in her household.

Newer research into ASB practice in Australia found legal action, specifically eviction, for nuisance behaviour particularly impacted women who were victims of abuse (Martin et al., 2019). Violence towards female tenants is routinely reframed as nuisance behaviour that should be controlled by the female tenant. Additionally, Martin et al. (2019) found an over representation of Indigenous women and children on the receiving end of legal action from the landlord, with complex barriers to support for Indigenous communities, suggesting an additional element of vulnerability in the form of ethnicity. There is little additional research into ASB that considers ethnicity, however, Prior (2009), who interviewed ASB practitioners, found that some BME groups were perceived as more antisocial than others with 'normal' practices for certain newer groups in the neighbourhood seen as antisocial by more settled residents. Despite understanding that new immigrant families may have different experiences of acceptable behaviour, and that racism may influence what is reported, authorities were found not to question whether or not to respond, but simply when and how to act. Despite the acceptance that some refugees and immigrants may have had highly traumatic experiences prior to living in the area, legal action for ASB was perceived as appropriate and necessary (Prior, 2009). Returning to Martin et al.'s (2019) study, evicting women for the behaviour of male visitors or teenage children, that in some cases can be argued to be impossible for

them to prevent, is unlikely to effectively stop ASB and is especially punitive, causing trauma and victimisation of the women in question. As Scott (2006) argues, this should be understood within the wider social context of the problematisation of women, especially single mothers, who are punished for being perceived as deviating from the norm of a nuclear family.

This discussion has highlighted how women are often held responsible for the behaviour of violent partners, with social landlords holding them responsible for the nuisance caused to others as a result of the abuse they receive (Nixon and Hunter, 2001; Hunter and Nixon, 2009; Scott, 2006). However, the degree to which women should be held responsible for their own and other's behaviour whilst experiencing abuse should take into account special considerations, including their current and historic experiences of abuse. Threat of, or experience of, physical, psychological and/or emotional harm limits the amount individuals should be held responsible for their actions (or lack of action), where alternate action may lead to more abuse (Friedman, 2013). Friedman (2013), who argued vulnerability was a particularly useful concept through which to understand women's experiences of domestic abuse, explored the extent to which abused mothers should be held responsible for failing to prevent the abuse of their children and argued women should be excused for their actions due to the history of the relationship with the abuser which is likely to increase their fear of them and hinder their ability to protect others. It may also lead to level of passivity in the face of their own abuse as they may lose the capacity to protect themselves. Intervention by the woman may also lead to increased risk of more severe harm to herself and others. This discussion highlights how using the concept of vulnerability to understand the experiences of women experiencing abuse can help us to highlight the injustice faced by victims of domestic abuse when held responsible (and receive ASB sanction) for failing to control the behaviour of their partner and brings to mind Bond-Taylor's (2016) study which found the ability of women to meet the requirements of their social landlords and prevent further ASB intervention was hindered by the control from, and increased risk of abuse from, male partners.

Housing providers and social services do not always have sufficient knowledge about domestic abuse which can make the barriers preventing victims from escaping

violence harder for women to overcome (Austin, 2012). Educating housing professionals, as well as other services, on the barriers to leaving abusive relationships and the guidance that is in place to support them may help to reduce victim blaming and lead to the duty to support victims fleeing violence actually being met (Austin, 2020; Yamawaki et al., 2012). Whilst the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has the potential to improve circumstances and support for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, this relies on the recognition that victims are not responsible for their own abuse, including in ASB cases where female tenants are perceived as perpetrators of ASB and become subject to ASB interventions due to the abusive behaviour of their (male) partners.

3.5.2: Vulnerability, (dis)ability and ASB in social housing

The specific experiences of disabled people who are perpetrators of ASB are, again, particularly important in relation to understanding the impact of ASB interventions. Disabled people are often viewed as more vulnerable than non-disabled people although, as acknowledged above, this view can be uncomfortable and contested when used in a more normative sense (Butler et al., 2016, Scully, 2013). However, when theorising disability and vulnerability, it is important to recognise that individual experiences of impairments vary and are impacted by how society responds to disability and difference. Disabled people's experiences of vulnerability are amplified by structural and institutional processes that can reinforce vulnerability and impact the ability disabled people are able to engage fully in society and mediate the challenges of their daily lives (Scully, 2013). Disabled people are disproportionately impacted by the intensification of welfare conditionality, especially those suffering from mental ill-health, although the majority of research in this area has been related to employment, social security and disabled people's benefits (Dwyer et al., 2020; Harrison and Hemingway, 2014; Pybus et al., 2019; Shefer et al, 2016). Nevertheless, these discussions are still helpful when considering the impact of welfare conditionality on those who are vulnerable as alleged perpetrators of ASB will often also be involved with other agencies (including agencies involved with the distribution of disability related benefits), with agencies involved with social housing tenants accused of ASB regularly sharing information about the households (Hunter, Nixon and Shayer, 2000).

Shefer et al. (2016) found that the Employment and Support Allowance assessment system is more suited to assessing physical rather than mental illness. Those suffering mental ill-health struggled with the traumatic experience of having to prove an invisible illness that puts severe constraints on them. Some felt they should consider trying to appear more like a negative stereotype of someone with a mental health problem (which they perceived as less presentable) in order to be believed. Many felt they were made to feel guilty for having a disability and were stigmatised for being unable to go to work due to this disability. Denying benefits to those with mental ill-health is a severe form of social exclusion, leaving them without resources and with extra stress, frustration, upset and a sense of powerlessness. This would be distressing for someone without a mental illness but can be additionally challenging for someone who already suffers from stress, depression or anxiety-related illnesses. The exacerbation of existing health problems is likely to be counterproductive in trying to change behaviour or move people off benefits and can increase public costs from increased use of health services (Shefer et al., 2016). The apparent discrimination against those experiencing mental ill-health was reinforced by reforms in incapacity payments as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which reduced eligibility for higher rates of disability-related social security payments, particularly for those suffering with mental ill-health. Those with mental health issues were less likely to be assessed as eligible for the newer Personal Independent Payments than those with musculoskeletal conditions, neurological conditions or diabetes, despite being previously eligible for its predecessor Disabled Living Allowance and resulting in increased financial and emotional hardship for these claimants (Pybus et al., 2019). This suggests that whilst disabled people may be perceived as vulnerable in the normative sense of the word used in policy and practice, it does not always translate to support (monetary or otherwise) in practice, as well as highlighting how the experiences of disabled people vary significantly.

In relation to ASB, a recent report from the Victim Commissioner acknowledged that some perpetrators could be classed as vulnerable but argued that vulnerability is not a reasonable justification for failing to meet behavioural conditions (Newlove, 2019). The report goes on to discuss mental ill-health, which many would suggest can be classed as a form of vulnerability (Ball, 2019; Hunter et al., 2000; Pleace and Wallace, 2011; Reeves and Lookstra, 2017; Shefer et al., 2016**)**:

> "Mental health issues of the perpetrator are sometimes cited by agencies and local authorities as reasons for the perpetrators behaviour and victims are asked to consider this and raise their tolerance threshold for behaviour. This is unacceptable" (Newlove, 2019, pg. 20).

This illuminating quote highlights that whilst vulnerability is a key conceptual frame through which overlapping issues can be understood, this does not necessarily result in additional support or the removal of possible sanction in practice, especially when related to behavioural conduct.

Despite the recognition that some alleged perpetrators, due to social constraints or physical or mental ill-health, may not be able to fully control, or understand the impact of, their behaviour, they are still viewed as having some level of rational choice and responsibility for ASB. Whilst there is some discretion within Universal Credit's work-related conditionality for exceptions from, or reduced, conditions placed upon claimants assessed as vulnerable, albeit without a formal definition on what vulnerability is (Stinson, 2019), there does not appear to be any similar built-in support for alleged perpetrators of ASB. The broad definition of ASB as any nuisance behaviour rather than intentional nuisance behaviour (see Chapter 2, section 2.2) means manifestations of mental ill-health can fall into the category of ASB. These behaviours can then be criminalised under ASB legislation and can lead to the increased risk of homelessness for those with mental health problems as their behaviour is viewed as nuisance (Krayer et al., 2018; Parr, 2009), although some studies have highlighted how disabled people experiencing mental ill-health may also be more likely to be victims of ASB (Nixon et al., 2008). Parr (2009), who interviewed housing officers managing ASB, found that many housing officers reported not knowing or recognising symptoms of mental health conditions and that they felt uncertain how to ask tenants if they have a disability. They also stated that a lack of time, resources and high levels of work pressures placed on them all led to health conditions, especially what they defined as "low level mental problems" (Parr, 2009, pg. 117) not being given due regard when managing ASB cases. As mentioned in Chapter 2, section 2.3, housing officers may often not have a good working relationship with social services, meaning it can be hard to access support for tenants. Whilst ASB appears to be perceived as central to the role of social

housing providers, housing officers reported a lack of clear guidance on their roles for supporting tenants and for care in the community (Parr, 2009). Additionally, whether social landlords are aware of disability and how they respond to it, including mental ill-health for both victims and perpetrators, can depend on accurate record keeping and an awareness of the duties placed on them to support disabled people (Hunter et al., 2007). A lack of awareness and/or unclear policies can lead to disabled people not receiving support they require and are entitled to, arguably increasing their potential vulnerability (Hunter et al., 2007). Krayer et al. (2018) argue that support for long-term, complex needs including mental health can fall under many different organisations' remit but remain outside the core task of each. Funding cuts and high work pressures can mean responses to these issues are harder to coordinate and joint working to resolve these issues becomes harder to achieve.

Pleace and Wallace (2011) found that UK housing support for people with mental illness is not well developed, with little evidence of successful support from NHS clinicians in relation to housing needs. More recently, Ball (2019) explored the priorities of family-based, intensive support services that households who were alleged to be engaged in ASB could be referred to. Many families referred to these supportive projects had a wide range of unmet support needs and social problems related to social exclusion, with referrals often made for behaviours that were unintentional. Unmet needs related to medical conditions, mental health, nutrition and security (both personal and financial), arguably all aspects of vulnerability which can culminate in behaviours that may breach the tenancy agreement, such as ASB. For practitioners working with these families, the priority was getting access to healthcare, food, beds and addressing housing conditions, rather than addressing ASB. For some families, these improvements were viewed as good enough changes and the household may be signed off from support provision before behaviour change is tackled at all (Ball, 2019). This suggests that the interests of support services and the interests of social landlords are likely to differ; the landlord is likely to want behaviour change in order to avoid further ASB-related complaints from other neighbours or tenants whereas support providers may focus on meeting basic needs and see this as enough. It also reinforces the argument that alleged perpetrators' vulnerabilities may be interpreted as behavioural deficits (Parr, 2009).

Overall, with housing officers reportedly unsure how to recognise symptoms of mental health conditions and a lack of support for disabled tenants, unmet support needs and manifestations of mental ill-health may routinely be treated as individual behavioural defects, with vulnerability of complainants viewed as important (Brown, 2015; Brown, 2013) and the vulnerability of alleged perpetrators not always recognised (Krayer et al., 2018; Parr, 2009). A more nuanced understanding of vulnerability, such as the approach highlighted above, could be used to combat some of these issues in practice, allowing better recognition of, and response to, vulnerability in practice (Kuran et al., 2020).

3.6: Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the theoretical framework underpinning the research, addressing some of the problems in the normative use of the concept of vulnerability and exploring how more carefully defined notions of vulnerability can help us to understand differential experiences of ASB interventions for alleged perpetrators. Whilst vulnerability has become an increasingly important concept in policy and practice More generally, and ASB policy and practice in particular, the idea of increased support for vulnerable people has often been focused on those perceived as deserving or as victims. Alleged perpetrators of ASB do not always easily fall into these categories although can often arguably be seen as vulnerable (Brown 2015; Brown, 2013; Carr, 2013). Of course, there is significant difference amongst social housing tenants, and amongst alleged perpetrators of social housing. An intersectional understanding of vulnerability can be a useful lens through which to explore different experiences of ASB interventions in social housing and can challenge the normative approach to vulnerability generally seen in policy and practice (Kuran et al., 2020). How institutions impact ontological security and housing (in)security, such as through ASB interventions, is argued to have a cumulative impact on levels of vulnerability and, again, is a useful framing for understanding experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB (Carr, 2013; Fineman, 2013). Within this more nuanced understanding of welfare conditionality and vulnerability, it is possible to further understand the experiences of especially affected groups such as social tenants more generally and women and disabled people in particular. Whilst difference and overlap of course exists within and

between these groups, this chapter has highlighted how welfare reforms have increased the vulnerability of social tenants by significantly reducing the incomes of both providers and tenants. Women and disabled people's experiences can be seen as particularly pertinent when considering the impact ASB interventions. Therefore, the chapter offered insight into how the concept of vulnerability can help explore this further and explored the existing research on how women and disabled people can experience ASB interventions. The next chapter outlines the methodology and methods of this research project.

Chapter 4: Research Methods and Methodology

This chapter presents the research methods and methodology underpinning the research project. First, the research aims and questions are introduced before the methodological framework is presented. This is followed by a discussion on the methods used and the benefits and limitations of the chosen approach before information about the sample and how this was generated is presented. Next, there is a section on the analysis of the data gathered, including the key steps undertaken with reference to research method literature. After, the ethical considerations relevant for the research are explored, including reflective sections on the interview encounters, the researcher's previous role as a housing practitioner and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Finally, additional limitations to the study are outlined.

Based upon the existing research and conceptual framework outlined in the previous two chapters the aims of this research are related to exploring the definition of ASB and experiences of ASB intervention by considering the lived experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB living within social housing using the lens of vulnerability. Additionally, the research aims to understand the impact of ASB interventions on alleged perpetrators in social housing, considering difference within experiences related to disability and gender (research aims are outlined in Chapter 1, section 1.3). Disability and gender have been shown to be of particular importance to structuring the experiences of alleged perpetrators of antisocial behaviour, particularly considering mental ill-health (Hunter et al., 2007; Krayer et al., 2018; Nixon et al., 2008; Parr, 2009) and domestic abuse (Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Martin et al., 2019). Of course, within these groups, there is difference to vulnerability and experiences of ASB intervention, making in depth investigation an important area of research (Butler, 2016; Cole, 2016; Kuran et al., 2020). Therefore, this research explores the views of tenants of social housing who are subject to ASB interventions through the use of qualitative longitudinal interviews in order to address the following research questions:

- How do social housing tenants subject to antisocial behaviour interventions define and perceive ASB in relation to themselves and others?
- How are ASB interventions experienced and perceived over time by social housing tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB?

- In what ways are tenants impacted and their behaviour and vulnerability affected by ASB interventions over time? How are elements of difference and diversity such as gender and (dis)ability important in this?
- What can a focus on lived experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB within the context of social housing add to understandings of vulnerability in the field of ASB and housing?

4.1: Methodological approach

The epistemological assumptions underpinning this research are interpretivist, meaning that as the social world is different from the natural world, it requires different methods to explore it. Subjective and different interpretations are important, with focus on meaning, context and understanding (Braun and Clarke, 2013). The research takes a bottom-up approach to knowledge, building observations and theory from the experiences of social actors. An interpretivist epistemology aligns well with qualitative research methods as value and emphasis is given to human interpretations and understandings of the social world (Ormston et al., 2014).

The ontology of the researcher is broadly constructivist, suggesting that social phenomena are constantly interpreted and re-interpreted by individuals and groups through interaction. Researchers, then, present a specific view of reality, rather than a definitive one, meaning personal reflexivity is important, considering how the assumptions of researchers can shape the knowledge produced (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Mason, 2002; Ormston et al., 2014). Emphasis is given to sociocultural context as meaning and experience are socially produced (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The values held with a constructivist ontology, again, align well with qualitative longitudinal research methods and with this research project which aims to give voice to the lived experiences of the tenant participants (Ormston et al., 2014). Participant interpretations are important and accepted, with focus on meanings, views and experiences (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Therefore, in order to answer the research questions, it is important to interactively speak with, and listen to, social tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB about their own understandings and experiences of their actions and the interventions designed to reduce ASB (Mason, 2002). Rather than attempting to locate a complete 'truth' about how alleged perpetrators of ASB are affected by ASB interventions, the purpose of this study is to

accept the experiences and perspectives of tenant participants under the assumption that understanding how alleged perpetrators of ASB make sense of ASB itself (and the related interventions) provides valuable insight alongside existing research from alternate perspectives (Braun and Clarke, 2013).

4.2: Methods used

The methods used in this research include a literature review and a combination of single and longitudinal qualitative interviews. Prior to empirical fieldwork design and implementation, a literature review was conducted to examine key policies, ideas and research in the arenas of social housing and ASB. Key word searches were conducted using words such as 'antisocial,' 'ASB,' 'nuisance' and 'anti-social' alongside 'social housing' and 'council housing.' This ensured access to research that incorporated the two key focuses of the work. Additionally, it was important to place ASB and social housing provision within a wider context. An understanding of the political, social and economic context within which ASB policy was introduced in the 1990s was key to understanding why these new controls of behaviour were put into place. This provided access to critical and intersectional understandings of vulnerability which proved especially helpful to aid conceptual understandings of experiences of ASB intervention. The historical and current context of social housing was also helpful to explore change and continuity in social housing provision and the impact of successive policies to limit its size and scope.

On top of these wider contextual and political dimensions, the impact of ASB interventions (particularly on social housing tenants) needed to be explored, which provided evidence of a lack of service user voices in current research. It also highlighted that the majority of research into ASB was conducted in the 1990s and early 2000s, with little new research conducted in the previous decade, although the Welfare Conditionality Project did combine access to service user voices and up to date research and older research continued to provide valuable insight into the research area (Flint, 2018). Research into the impact of ASB and other forms of welfare conditionality highlighted the importance of trajectories of change and continuity when assessing the impact of policies aimed at influencing service user behaviours with the expectation of changed behaviour in relatively short periods of

time to prevent further sanction (Batty, Flint and McNeill, 2018; Brown, 2011; Brown, 2013; Flint, 2018; McNeill, 2020).

Based on the findings of the literature review alongside the research aims and questions a qualitative, longitudinal study was developed and conducted using semi-structured interviews. Attempts were made to include a multi-method toolkit of diaries and visual methods; however, a combined lack of early tenant engagement with alternate methods and the Covid-19 pandemic (see section 4.6 below) made this unfeasible. Whilst qualitative methods are often criticised for their lack of breadth and limited generalisation, they are well-suited to capture the messiness and detail of real life, as well as giving a deeper understanding of an individual's context, experiences and perspectives (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Jenson and Laurie, 2016; Mason, 2002). Views, understandings and lived experiences can provide significant insight into a topic; therefore, it is useful to gather participants' views of ASB and interventions (Mason, 2002). The attempt to research lived experience places emphasis on how individuals live through and respond to experiences or events and can be particularly relevant to access where experience is also shaped by policy intervention and welfare agencies. Researching lived experience allows access to subjective interpretations of individuals' embodiment in cultural, historical, socio-political and individual contexts and, whilst recognising that experience of similar events may be different, can be methodologically explored and compared with others. Whilst there is a risk of lived experience being interpreted as necessarily individualistic, with individual lives perceived as unique, commonalities are likely to exist, with multiple studies exploring lived experience finding participants often do appear to share similar feelings, interpretations and experiences of events, termed 'shared typical' (McIntosh and Wright, 2018; Wright and Patrick, 2019).

Qualitative longitudinal research follows the same individuals in 'real' time as events develop, however, the concept of time itself arguably has increased in significance in a rapidly changing social world. Through time, it is possible to further understand social change or constancy and the relationship between individuals, historical processes and present structures (Neale, 2019; Saldaña, 2003). Individual biographies are important, but how lives and processes develop collectively, both shaping and shaped by wider social processes can also be explored. Time is not

experienced in a linear direction, but is often fluid, experienced as a multi-dimensional social construct impacted by life experiences and context. The narratives of events in the past are shaped by the present and qualitative longitudinal research can explore both human agency (the capacity of the individual to act and shape their own lives) and the dynamics of human subjectivity, where the meanings of events or processes can change over time for the researcher and participant (Neale, 2019; Saldaña, 2003). Corden and Nice (2007) state the use of qualitative longitudinal methods and service user perspectives are especially pertinent to evaluate policies or projects with the intention to make changes (such as ASB intervention which attempts to trigger and sustain changes to individual or household behaviour) as these methods can help develop and understand concepts such as transitions and adaptations to change and polices (Corden and Millar, 2007a; 2007b; Corden and Nice, 2007; Flint, 2018). Experiences, perceptions and feelings can vary for the participant and researcher at different points in time and how aware participants are of these changes can vary. This can increase the challenge for the researcher when analysing the data to draw consistent, clear conclusions, reinforcing the importance of researcher reflexivity (Corden and Millar, 2007a).

Whilst quantitative longitudinal research can gather detailed information about individuals, a qualitative longitudinal approach allows access to individual narratives and context over time (Neale, 2019). However, there are a number of challenges that are presented when conducting qualitative longitudinal research. There is an increased burden of both time and financial resources, with additional administrative tasks needed to ensure informed consent and ethical rigour for each stage, as well as keeping in contact with participants between research waves (Neale, 2019; Thomson, 2007). The cumulative nature of the data gathered requires additional reading and analysis from multiple lenses to do justice to the data collected which meant fieldwork for this project needed to start early in the research process in order to leave enough time for subsequent analysis. Deciding on an end point to the research can also be challenging, particularly considering the illusive nature of the concept of time. Similarly, the decided upon time frame and gap between research waves in the study may not match the trajectory of a participant's life (Corden and Nice, 2007; Neale, 2019). In this instance, the researcher drew upon her own experiences of managing complaints of ASB to identify 6 to 9 months as a period of

time in which ASB interventions were likely to be introduced and which also provided her with opportunity for two waves of research within a 12-to-18-month fieldwork period, leaving the amount of data to be organised and analysed manageable. Finally, there is a risk that policy and practice may change over the research period, especially in rapidly developing fields (Neale, 2019). Despite these challenges, using a flexible approach to time can mean multiple interviews can be used to discuss and explore the past, present and future (although it is important to keep track of these temporal changes as what was in the future at the first wave of interviews may be the present or the past by the second). The intensive exploration of lived experience and the journey of participant's lives with the ability to explore the dynamics of both human agency and subjectivity provided by qualitative longitudinal research makes it well suited to the research questions of this study (Neale, 2019).

Two waves of qualitative longitudinal interviews were undertaken with tenant participants, the first (Wave A) after an initial allegation of ASB, and a second, approximately 6 to 9 months later (Wave B). Additionally, single semi-structured, contextual qualitative interviews were undertaken with Key Informants. Interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes and whilst most interviews were undertaken with single people, one interview took place with a tenant couple and one Key Informant interview was conducted with two Informants from the same organisation present. The interview guides for the first wave of interviews were developed through engagement with current academic literature but allowed for flexibility and constant improvement or adaptation (Appendices 5 and 6). The guides for the second interviews were developed from ongoing analysis of each tenant's first interview to explore and develop the stories and experiences of each tenant participant (see example interview guide in Appendix 7). Whilst each guide had reminders for the key issues the tenant discussed at the previous interview, the second wave guides also followed important themes, processes and continuities from the analysis of the previous wave of research as a whole, with a reminder of the aims of the research at the top of each guide to ensure internal coherence and integrity across the research waves (Neale, 2019; Saldaña, 2003). Whilst interviews can be accused of providing a snapshot in time, the use of repeat qualitative longitudinal interviews can help to explore change, or lack of change, over time and allows for the development of more nuanced and rich understandings of complex, and sometimes contradictory, storied

lives (Lewis, 2007; Thomson, 2007). Whilst acknowledging that information relayed in an interview is not a direct representation of the participant's perceptions, and that the concept of "change" itself is subjective and contextual, the two interviews provide the chance to explore how tenants construct and perceive themselves, their experiences and their stories, allowing for discussion and reflection (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Corden and Millar, 2007b; Saldaña, 2003). Semi-structured interviews allow for interaction between the researcher and participant to flow, giving the interview the appearance of a conversation, albeit with a purpose (Mason, 2002; Oakley, 1981). The fluid, flexible approach allows for the exploration of unexpected themes, and allows the researcher to ask for clarity in the participant's responses (Mason, 2002).

4.3: Sample

The majority of qualitative longitudinal research keep sample sizes relatively small in order to ensure depth of analysis (Neale, 2019). Whist the theoretical position of the researcher can influence sampling, pragmatism is also necessary to gather an appropriate sample within the resources available (Emmel, 2013). For this research, 15 social housing tenants from 14 households who had received allegations of ASB made against them were sampled (see Table 3 below for breakdown of the tenant sample). These participants were current social housing tenants who had at least one complaint of ASB made about them and whose landlord currently had an open ASB case about them. Access to participants was gained through four gatekeeper organisations, including Registered Social Landlords and Local Authorities across the Yorkshire and Humber region. Potential gatekeepers, for example Registered Social Landlords or Local Authority Housing Options Units were sent information leaflets about the research, inviting participation in the project (see Appendix 1: Stakeholder Information Leaflet). The gatekeeper organisations recruited included a small, city-based housing association, a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) housing association, a large housing association and a Local Authority, covering housing provision across the Yorkshire and Humber region (see Table 4 below for Key Informants at a glance). Stakeholders sent information leaflets about the research and a cover letter to their own tenants about whom they held an open case of ASB (see Appendices 2 and 3: Tenant Information Leaflet and Cover Letter), with leaflets

regularly sent out to new alleged perpetrators of ASB over the research period. This ensured that those recruited had explanatory power in relation to ASB interventions (Neale, 2019). Whilst the sample may not be representative of ASB cases, this type of purposive sampling generally focuses on credibility rather than representation. This means that focus of the sample is those seen as most useful and appropriate for comparison within the resources available (Emmel, 2013).

Neale (2019) explains participants do not need to have exact, comparable circumstances as the aim of qualitative, longitudinal research is to explore experiences across a range of complementary circumstance and understandings. One of the intentions of this research was to work across a broad range of experiences of the ASB process. Therefore, participants were purposively sampled to include diversity of genders, levels of impairment and social landlords. Although diversity of age was not specifically sampled for, and the ages of tenants was not requested in interviews, some tenants reported being aged over 65 which they felt was relevant to the research and is therefore included in the table below. Although attempts were made to recruit participants from BME backgrounds, and a BME housing association was recruited as a stakeholder organisation, the tenant participants who took part were all of White British ethnic origin. As Harrison with Davis (2001) point out, gender, disability and ethnicity can all impact housing security and access to social rights and provisions. Gender and disability (especially mental ill-health) have been found to impact experiences of the ASB process by multiple researchers and therefore, tenants were recruited across gender and disability. The voices and perspectives of BME people are not present due to the inability to recruit BME tenant participants, and this remains a sampling limitation of the study, as in much of the ASB research more generally. However, care has been taken to consider how race and ethnicity might be a relevant aspect of difference alongside others which come through more prominently in the study such as gender and disability. It is likely that ethnicity would be another key dimension through which to explore relation to ASB and the impact of sanction and support in ASB (although there would be difference within this dimension, see Harrison and Davis, 2001).

Table 3: Tenant participants by research wave and reported gender, ethnicity, age and (dis)ability

Tenant participants	Took part in Wave A interview	Took part in Wave B interview	Gender	Ethnicity	Over 65 years old?	Declared disability/ health condition
Amelia	Yes	Yes	Female	White British	No	Yes
Barry *joint tenant with Kerry	Yes	Yes	Male	White British	Yes	Yes
Caroline	Yes	Yes	Female	White British	No	Yes
Charlie	Yes	Yes	Male	White British	No	Yes
Daisy	Yes	Yes	Female	White British	No	No
Harry	Yes	Yes	Male	White British	Yes	Yes
Jason	Yes	No	Male	White British	No	Yes
Jenny	Yes	Yes	Female	White British	No	No
Kerry *joint tenant with Barry	Yes	No	Female	White British	No	No
Mel	Yes	Yes	Female	White British	No	Yes
Michael	Yes	Yes	Male	White British	No	Yes
Pauline	Yes	Yes	Female	White British	No	Yes
Rachel	Yes	Yes	Female	White British	No	No
Rangers	Yes	Yes	Female	White British	Yes	Yes
Rosie	Yes	Yes	Female	White British	No	Yes

Within the final sample, 10 female and 5 male tenants were recruited, with 9 of these tenants reporting a physical and/or mental health impairment (see Table 7, Chapter 7 for a more detailed breakdown of vulnerability amongst the sample). There was also a range of different allegations of ASB, including noise, drug dealing, arguments or shouting, threatening behaviour, parking nuisance, fly tipping, visitor nuisance, neighbour dispute and domestic abuse made about those sampled. In response to these allegations, an assortment of ASB interventions were used by the landlord, including home visits, warning letters, mediation, injunctions and eviction processes

(see Table 6, Chapter 6 for a full breakdown of the interventions used for each tenant).

Whilst conducting longitudinal research, there is a risk that participants may move away or become uncontactable over the research period (Lewis and McNaughton Nicholls, 2014; Saldaña, 2003). Whilst initially aiming to over-recruit for the first wave interviews to reduce the impact of attrition on the project, when the UK entered into the Covid-19 lockdown, stakeholders were no longer available to continue to send out information leaflets to their tenants. However, attempts were made to limit attrition through collecting multiple re-contact details, for example, telephone numbers and email addresses, maintaining low-level contact between research phases, providing the researcher's contact details to allow participants to inform them if their contact details or circumstances change and asking participants the best way to contact them if initial contact details fail, such as permission to contact a significant other (Lewis and McNaughton Nicholls, 2014). The high level of engagement in the project was surprising, with the researcher sensitive to the engagement burden of multiple interviews on participants. Attrition was very low, with only one household choosing not to take part in a second interview, which the researcher felt was a combination of luck and, potentially, the Covid-19 lockdown that meant tenant participants might be more available for the second wave of interviews than they would otherwise have been.

Table 4: Key Informants at a glance

Key Informant	Type of housing provider
ASB Manager	Large Housing Association
ASB Manager	Local Authority
Neighbourhood Services Manager	Local Authority
Neighbourhood Services Manager	Small, BAME Housing Association
Housing Manager	City-based Housing Association

In addition to tenant participants, 5 Key Informants working to manage and implement ASB policy from within the four different organisations were recruited (shown in Table 4 above). These included an ASB Manager from a large housing association, a Neighbourhood Services Manager from a small housing association, a Housing Manager from a city-based housing association and an ASB Manager and Neighbourhood Services Manager from a Local Authority. When stakeholder organisations agreed to take part in the study, they were asked if they had a Key Informant of ASB who would be willing to take part in the study (see Appendix 1: Stakeholder Information Leaflet). Semi-structured, qualitative interviews were conducted with those willing to take part and again, purposive sampling was used to ensure the Key Informants had knowledge and involvement with the management of ASB within their organisation, whether this was front-line engagement with tenants or writing policy. Ultimately, all Key Informants involved in the study had involvement with both the creation and delivery of policy and procedures related to ASB within the stakeholder organisations they were part of. The number of Key Informants remained small as these interviews were conducted to provide context for the study, providing detail about each organisation's approach to managing and implementing ASB policies.

4.4: Analysis

The interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim onto Microsoft Word and the written transcripts produced and uploaded onto NVivo for thematic analysis. Additionally, a 'change over time' summary document was written for each tenant participant outlining key changes or continuities between the first and second interviews. This document of condensed information was also uploaded onto NVivo and allowed the researcher to compare broad change (or lack of change) over time more easily. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting ideas, concepts or themes in the data which can be used to interpret various aspects of the research topic. This method is commonly used to study views, perceptions or experiences and can be used to provide evidence as part of evaluations or in favour of policy change. The researcher actively identified themes, meaning the act of organising codes and themes from the data is not analytically neutral (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Mason, 2002). Therefore, it is important to have a clear justification for

how data is organised and how themes are identified (Mason, 2002). In this research, the research questions were repeatedly referred to in order to ensure themes remained relevant to and coherent with the research questions. Case nodes helped to ensure important themes were identified and categorised correctly, including definitional comments of ASB, the overlap of victim and perpetrator, relationships with services, experiences of ASB interventions, impact of interventions, reflections of change over time and difference, which included how tenants felt their gender, disability, age, class or family make up had an impact on their experiences of ASB interventions.

The data gathered in this study required multiple readings and interrogations to fully make use of the information-rich data. Each reading required multiple techniques of analysis, including case, thematic and integrative analysis (Lewis, 2007; Neale, 2019). Each case was systematically analysed line by line with themes or issues categorised into nodes and themes using NVivo software. This was followed by thematic analysis through broader conceptual and temporal readings of cross-case data. These steps of analysis were repeated as the fieldwork progressed through the first and second waves of data collection. At the end of data collection, a full-scale integrative analysis was conducted where the descriptive and interpretive analysis was synthesised to explore and develop similarities and differences across themes, cases and time (Neale, 2019). This was developed with reference to existing evidence and knowledge, shifting the analytical gaze to different temporal frames of reference and both micro and macro processes (Neale, 2019; Saldaña, 2003).

4.5: Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations were of utmost importance for the study, with focus on informed consent, voluntary participation, transparency and safety (for both participants and researcher). Ethical approval was granted by the Social Policy and Social Work Ethics Committee at the University of York. Participants gave informed consent prior to their involvement in the research which was revisited on an ongoing basis throughout the study. They were provided information sheets (Appendix 1 and 2: Information Leaflets), asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 3: Consent Forms) and had the chance to ask questions before and during the research (Webster, Lewis and Brown, 2014). Information sheets and consent forms were verbally read

with participants before their interviews. Participation was voluntary and participants were able to withdraw their consent and participation at any time during the research. The need to maintain contact between research stages was considered alongside the ethical requirement for completely voluntary participation (Corden and Millar, 2007a). Tenant participants were contacted between research waves as often as had been agreed with the tenant at the first interview and in a method agreed with the tenant (email, text or call) in order for the contact to be as non-intrusive as possible. Participants were reminded between research stages that their participation was voluntary, and they could withdraw if they wished. They were assured that taking part in the research did not affect any of the services they received and that the research was entirely independent of these services. They were also assured that what they said in an interview would not be passed back to their landlord or other practitioners related to their ASB case or tenancy.

Tenants' and Key Informant details were anonymised, with names, addresses, personal and landlord details anonymised at transcription with a key kept for the researcher to keep track, ensuring participants could not be identified by others. The research followed a strict data management plan, approved by the Social Policy and Social Work Ethics Committee at the University of York, with hard copies of consent forms kept in a locked cabinet and digital data stored securely on the researcher's personal University of York file store. Audio recordings were made on an encrypted device which only the researcher had access to and were transferred to their personal file store with the University of York as soon as possible, always within 24 hours of the interview. They were then removed from the device.

There was initially some confusion from three tenants at the beginning of the research period. These tenants called the number on the information leaflets as they believed it had something to do with their ASB case or that their landlord had passed their details on to the researcher without their permission which highlighted the importance of repeated informed consent and of ensuring tenants understood how and why they had received an information leaflet and what would be done with their information. Tenants were reassured that the researcher did not have any of their personal details and that taking part (or not) in the research would not have any impact on their ASB case or their social tenancy. They were also reassured that if

they chose not to take part in the research, the researcher would not store their telephone number to contact them in the future. Two tenants chose to take part in the research following this conversation and one decided against involvement in the study.

Interviews can present a power imbalance between the researcher and participant, with the researcher maintaining control and asking the questions (Atkinson and Silverman, 1997; Mason, 2002; Oakley, 1981). In an attempt to combat this, the researcher was open to answering questions asked by the participant. In order to adhere to ethical principles of interviewing, the questions asked in the interviews remained professional, non-judgemental and relevant to the research questions (Mason, 2002). The conversational feel of the interview could have led to participants revealing more than they would normally wish to (Mason, 2002; Oakley, 1981). Therefore, at the end of each interview, participants were asked to reflect on what was said and to let the researcher know anything they wished to have removed from the research data. Tenants were also given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms if they wished to, which many did. Tenants were compensated for their time at each interview with £20 in shopping vouchers. These were presented to the tenant at the beginning of their interviews (or posted to the tenant if the interview took place virtually or via telephone). Tenants were reassured that if they ended the interview early or chose to withdraw from the study later, they would keep their vouchers.

It was possible that safeguarding issues could arise whilst conducting this research. The researcher previously worked as a social housing practitioner (see section 4.5.2 below for a reflection on this) and had been trained to spot and manage safeguarding issues relating to vulnerable adults and children. If she had concerns for the participant or anyone else, she referred them to the relevant agency. A list of useful local contacts was available at each interview for participants to be signposted to if they needed any support. If participants asked for advice on particular issues during or after the interview, the list of appropriate services to signpost them to was useful in this regard as well. Examples of these services included: domestic abuse services, social services, GPs, charitable organisations, local drug and alcohol abuse services, Citizens Advice Bureaus, debt advice services and other locally

available services dependent on availability in the area. One unanticipated support service was needed for a tenant who was suffering bereavement and family illness. Following the interview, which took place over the phone during the UK national Covid lockdown, the researcher (with the tenant's permission) emailed her the contact numbers and website addresses of counselling support services for family members who support or have lost loved ones through cancer. The researcher checked these services were available to access virtually and free of charge.

Finally, the personal safety of the researcher was considered, with the majority of in-person interviews held in offices, libraries and other public places (where a booked room was not possible) rather than in a tenant's own home. The researcher had attended Personal Safety training sessions and understood the need to end an interview should she feel unsafe. Additionally, the researcher agreed a safety protocol of informing her supervisors of her whereabouts and the expected start and end time of each interview, maintaining contact should there be a problem. There was one occasion where the researcher ended the interview early due to feeling unsafe and, whilst a second interview did take place with this tenant, it was held over the phone.

4.5.1: Researcher reflections on interview encounters and the associated ethical considerations

As part of being a reflexive researcher, I maintained field notes at the end of each interview, including answering set questions about the interview setting, feelings about how well the interview went and any other thoughts or avenues of interest that were opened as a result of the interview (see the end of Appendix 6 for notes for the researcher). These personal and subjective notes were written as soon as possible after the interview and returned to after interviews had been transcribed to reflect on my initial thoughts and feelings. The notes were useful to help identify my own feelings and assumptions and offered an opportunity for these to be acknowledged and critically reflected upon (Elliot, Ryan and Hollway, 2011). Reflections on interview encounters can feel uncomfortable as researchers recognise times when things may have gone wrong, may feel or seem unprofessional and/or can highlight the messiness of conducting qualitative interviews where, in contrast, the more formal findings generally presented for academic scrutiny are more rounded,

finalised and polished after multiple re-workings. Therefore, reflexivity can be hindered by the wish of the researcher to show professionalism and competency, especially in a highly competitive academic environment (Elliot et al,. 2011). Nevertheless, these field notes and the later reflections on interviews I engaged with were helpful to offer a deeper, more reliable level of analysis to the interview data by acknowledging researcher assumptions (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Elliot et al., 2011; Mason, 2002).

The interview encounters through this research were often upsetting or uncomfortable. Many tenant participants presented as emotional during the interviews, including becoming upset, tearful and/or angry and disclosed information that was highly sensitive and emotionally charged. As discussed within the ethical considerations above, this was generally anticipated for, with opportunities presented to tenants to end the interview at any time and information for support services provided to tenants wherever appropriate. I also ensured that I took tissues and a spare bottle of water to interviews for tenants to use as and if needed. Whilst no tenant chose to end the interview early and some reported talking about their experiences as cathartic, it is important to recognise that, as a researcher, I am not therapeutically trained and my responses to these emotions were my own initial empathetic, reassuring and automatic responses to high emotion rather than necessarily the reasoned and more distanced responses of a therapist or counsellor which would potentially have been more helpful to the tenant (Elliot et al., 2011). This was accounted for by referring to more appropriate services, however, the emotional burden that was placed on me as the researcher was less prepared for.

Supervisions were used to reflect on research encounters with another party and to support my emotional health as the encounters themselves, but also the creation, maintenance and ending of relationships with participants added an additional emotional burden (Elliot et al, 2011). Interviews which included references to domestic abuse were particularly upsetting for me as these triggered reflections on personal experiences that I had (naively) not disclosed to my supervisors prior to writing about this topic in the thesis. However, acknowledging and recognising the impact of these encounters on my emotional health and the potential impact of this prior experience on the analysis was important in order to set these feelings aside,

build a critical distance and deepen my analysis (Dobson, 2009; Elliot et al., 2011). In order to do this, I spoke to my supervisors and family about how I was feeling, took breaks where necessary and drafted many analysis chapters, starting with a flow of words that was generally emotionally charged and drafting and re-drafting (with reference to the existing literature) until I was able to take a step back from the personal feelings and present an analysis that was based on the data and academic knowledge. It is also worth noting that my sensitivity to topics such as domestic abuse and the sensitivity that was needed when broaching these topics may have led to a reservation in probing in the interview for more detail on these issues. I allowed the tenants to lead the discussion when they were talking about things that were upsetting to them, only probing for clarification rather than more detail, which may have led to less detail being provided about these important areas. However, the data related to topics that could be upsetting was rich and detailed, suggesting that this did not hinder the data collection in a meaningful way.

Supervisions were also useful to offer a second opinion where my judgement may have been clouded about the research interview. In one interview, briefly mentioned in the ethical considerations above, I ended the Wave A interview early for my personal safety. In this interview, which took place at the tenant's flat as she had informed me she was unable to leave her home for health reasons, multiple visitors repeatedly entered the flat, including a support worker, friends and people the tenant said they did not know. The tenant informed me that there were multiple instances of violence from visitors to her flat, including her sons, and that she had no way of controlling who visited. This led to me choosing to leave the interview setting after this disclosure, thanking the tenant for her time and saying I would be in touch. When initially reflecting on the interview, I did not think it had gone very well as it had been very difficult to keep her on the topic of her ASB case and she often lost her train of thought when answering questions. The support worker who attended also disclosed information that I was concerned would not have been given to me by the tenant, was inappropriate and unethical, especially as the focus of the interviews was the tenant's experiences and understandings rather than external parties and, additionally, the support worker had not signed a consent form. My initial reaction was to not include the interview and not return to the tenant for the second wave of interviews.

After sharing my concerns with my supervisor, he suggested to transcribe the interview and see what data had come from the tenant themselves, what information could help inform understandings of the data but not be quoted, and what, if anything, was inappropriate data to be used at all. This was a useful exercise as my feelings of discomfort from during the interview may have clouded my judgement of the encounter as a whole. Transcribing the interview allowed me to see that whilst there was much data from the tenant that was not immediately relevant to the research aims or questions, it helped to give a picture of the tenant's daily life. Within these discussions much was, in fact, highly relevant to their experiences of ASB intervention, including feelings of hopelessness and a lack of control. The support worker who spoke in the interview did not give different information to the tenant other than explaining their own role and how they came to be supporting the tenant, generally supporting the tenant's own explanations. The support worker's words were not used in the analysis and, where their explanations differed from the tenant's, this was viewed as an example of how individuals perceptions, understandings and knowledge of specific experiences and bureaucratic processes can differ. It was agreed that I would return to this tenant for the second wave interview but only in a more neutral and controlled environment and, if this was not possible due to the tenant's health concerns, to conduct the interview over the phone for personal safety, acknowledging that I couldn't, in this instance, control who else might be present at that time (Mneimneh et al., 2018). As the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown occurred at the time of the second interview, a phone interview was conducted (section 4.6 offers a reflection of the impact of Covid-19 on the project and the interviews).

4.5.2: From Housing Officer to Academic Researcher: a reflection

As mentioned in the introductory chapter (section 1.1), alongside my previous studies, I worked as a Housing Officer in a social housing provider, where my duties included managing tenancies and re-letting properties, with responsibility for around 400 homes. As part of this role, I was also responsible for the case management of ASB complaints (alongside the ASB team) within this area, including taking complaints, interviewing alleged perpetrators and following the ASB procedure.

By the time I started preparing for the fieldwork for this project, I had already left the social housing organisation. Nevertheless, to avoid a potential conflict of interest, or confusion for the participants, the tenants who took part in the research had never had contact from myself in my professional capacity. I was upfront with tenants, Key Informants and stakeholder organisations about my previous role and why I wanted to conduct the research; specifically, that I did not feel people who were alleged to be engaged in ASB had the opportunity to have their say about what they felt was antisocial or what they thought about the ASB procedure.

Dobson (2009) has highlighted how being an 'insider researcher' can have certain benefits and challenges and that reflection into these dual roles is important as it can highlight the existing values and experiences of the researcher. Having worked in the social housing sector for around 8 years, I had a good working knowledge of how various procedures and policies were applied on the ground and the impact these had on the front-line staff, as well as the tenants. I was also informed of recent benefit changes through the Welfare Reform Acts 2012 and 2016, and the working relationships of social housing, the police and social services. All of this knowledge helped during interviews with Key Informants and tenants alike as the language used, especially welfare and ASB-related terminology, and the processes of warning letters and other interventions were easily recognisable and I was able to identify where probing for more detail could be helpful. Having a history in social housing also potentially helped with recruiting stakeholders, as sometimes my name, but especially my experience, were recognised as having something in common with the stakeholder organisations themselves (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). There is also some evidence that whilst I did not have experience as a social housing tenant accused of ASB, my experience in a role that I viewed as supportive to social housing tenants could increase my levels of empathy for both tenant and Key Informant participants (Gair, 2011).

However, my former role also presented some challenges. I had to be careful to not assume I immediately understood what a participant was describing, and ensured I asked follow-up questions rather than assuming, for example, a letter that was sent to them was a warning letter rather than simply a letter, recognising that my prior knowledge of the topic does not automatically result in enhanced understanding of

the participant's experiences (Gair, 2011). I also had to be careful to remember my boundaries and remit as a researcher, not as a housing professional. My role, when conducting interviews, was not to listen and offer advice, but simply to listen, providing information for support services after the interview if relevant. Initially, this was quite difficult for me when conducting interviews with tenants, and I had to remind myself before and during interviews of my role. Whilst role confusion can occur in any research, there is an increased risk of this when the researcher is familiar with the setting or experiences of participants from outside their role as a researcher (Dwyer and Buckle, 2009).

The interviews with Key Informants presented further challenges. Whilst I had recognised differences in opinions between myself and my colleagues when working as a housing officer, my interviews with Key Informants challenged my assumptions of what it meant to be a social housing provider and a housing officer. I found it difficult to accept that, on occasion, my values differed greatly from those at an organisational and managerial level and I began to question many further parts of my former role, feeling a disconnect between what I had felt I was doing at the time, and how it was presented back to me from the organisations themselves. As Dobson (2009) highlighted in her reflection on dual roles, there is a risk I would attempt to give more flattering interpretations of what was said by Key Informants in organisations I had previously had professional relationships as I did not want the participants to appear unprofessional. Because of my challenged assumptions and feelings of loyalty to organisations, I had to take particular care when analysing interviews, spending extra time checking and re-checking the analysis to ensure the final result was based on what was said in the interviews, not on what I remembered from my job (Dobson, 2009; Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Overall, whilst the 'insider' status presented both benefits and challenges, a reflexive approach to interviewing and fieldwork and analysis was needed to manage this effectively.

4.6: Impact of Covid-19

Towards the end of Wave A of the fieldwork for this research, the UK went into lockdown as a result of Covid-19. This led to a number of unanticipated, additional challenges for the research. The stakeholders that had been used to access and recruit participants were no longer in their offices and therefore, were no longer

advertising the study with potential participants, putting a halt to further recruitment and ending Wave A peremptorily. Face to face interviews had to be cancelled which impacted the ability to conduct further fieldwork, although telephone or online interviews were offered in their place. The second Wave B of interviews started shortly into the lockdown period, meaning these had to be take place via alternate methods. Some of the tenants involved in the study had limited access to the internet and poor mobile data connectivity which presented further barriers to completing second wave interviews over the phone or online. Only one Wave B interview was conducted online with the remainder taking place over the telephone.

Virtual or telephone interviews can have their own advantages and disadvantages that were not considered as part of the original research design. Gray et al. (2020) found participants in research interviews had positive experiences using Zoom Video Communications, highlighting a number of benefits, including ease of use, accessibility with phone, tablet or computer, time and cost savings due to lack of travel requirements and enhanced personal interface to discuss sensitive topics (in comparison to phone interviews where participants would not get to see their interviewer). However, both the researcher and participant's competencies with online video call services such as Skype or Zoom Video Communications can reduce levels of comfort and hinder the building of rapport (Gray et al., 2020; Sedgwick and Spiers, 2009). Whilst the researcher was comfortable with these services, a number of participants were not and were less willing to try a video interview than a telephone one, even where they did have access to the internet. As these were second wave interviews, for the most part, the researcher and tenants had built up a level of rapport from the first interview, and the researcher had kept in contact with participants between the research waves. This helped to keep the interviews comfortable and well-paced. There is also evidence that participants can sometimes feel more comfortable discussing sensitive topics when there is some distance between themselves and the researcher, meaning telephone or online interviews may make participants feel more at ease (Slipes, Roberts and Mullan, 2019).

Interviews taking place in the home were more likely to be interrupted by lost connections, as well as increased distractions from family members, pets or visitors

knocking on the door, meaning the interview could be interrupted a number of times or become shorter than a standard face to face interview (Gray et al., 2020; Sedgwick and Speirs, 2009). These interruptions also highlight that lack of privacy could be a further concern, with the researcher not necessarily aware (or able to control) if there is another person in the room with the participant (Mneimneh et al., 2018). Where tenants lived with other people, the researcher recommended that the participant take part in the interview in a room on their own wherever possible, but this was not always feasible when young children were part of the household and two interviews took place with young children present in the room of the tenant participant.

Another issue raised by telephone interviews in particular is a lack of verbal cues. Long silences, that in face-to-face interviews could be seen as the participant taking time to think, could be assumed to be a drop in connection, meaning the researcher is likely to interrupt the participant's thinking time to check they are still there. Whilst this is not a major issue, it can disrupt the flow of conversation (Slipes et al., 2019). It can also be more difficult to pick up on a participant's distress when talking about sensitive topics, meaning the researcher had to pay extra attention to verbal cues, regularly checking the participant was feeling okay and offering them a break. Whilst no tenants chose to take a break in the interview, checking in on the participant was helpful for the researcher to be reassured the tenant was not distressed and provided opportunity for tenants to choose to move the subject away from sensitive matters if they felt the need to (Slipes et al., 2019).

The wider context of Covid-19 also added additional strain to both researcher and participant, and this had to be managed ethically. Taking part in research could have added an additional burden on participants who were already living through a time of crisis. There is evidence that already marginalised and vulnerable populations are most impacted by health emergencies, meaning the tenants taking part in this study may have suffered more than the general population during the Covid-19 lockdown (Nuffield Council on Bioethics, 2020). In order to avoid excluding participants by assuming they did not want to take part, but to also ensure the research did not feel an additional burden, tenants were contacted before their second interview was due to see if they were still interested in taking part, acknowledging that the wider

situation may have impacted their willingness or interest in being involved. Participants were also given the option to delay their second interview until after the pandemic related restrictions were removed and they felt more comfortable completing an interview, although no tenants chose this option. Whilst providing participants these options could have increased attrition, it was judged more important to reduce any burden or strain felt by participants at a time that was already likely to be especially difficult for them.

4.7: Limitations

On top of the limitations to the chosen methods discussed above, there were a number of other limitations to the study that should be outlined. Firstly, as the geographical area of the study was limited to the Yorkshire and Humber region, it is possible that other counties may have different concentrations of diverse types of ASB, and therefore alternate responses to it. Additionally, with four stakeholders involved, there is still a possibility that other stakeholder organisations may manage ASB differently. However, qualitative research is often limited to small areas dependent on cost and time (Mason, 2002) and the information gathered in the research held similarities to broader scale research (see analysis chapters). It is also likely that stakeholder organisations do have similar (although certainly not identical processes) as a high proportion receive training and consultancy on the management of ASB from one national source, RESOLVE (Resolve, 2021). Furthermore, emphasis was placed on the experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB, who are subject to national policy which is applied by local providers. These providers have access to the same raft of ASB interventions and, therefore, alleged perpetrators of ASB are likely to have at least some similar experiences across the country. This suggests that, whilst the study is limited in terms of numbers and geographic area, lessons can still be learnt from this study which would be relevant both nationally and internationally, for example, in countries such as Australia where intervention by social landlords into 'nuisance' behaviour is also used as a method of controlling behaviour (Cheshire and Bulgar, 2015; Power and Bergen, 2018; Rhodes and Mullins, 2009).

The use of gatekeepers to access participants is not without its risk, as there is the potential that gatekeepers could place barriers in the way for research to be

conducted and a participant's willingness to engage in a research project presented to them by a gatekeeper could depend on the level of trust they have of that gatekeeper organisation (Emmel et al., 2007). Nevertheless, it is understood that access to socially excluded groups may often depend on the engagement of stakeholder organisations to provide access (Emmel et al., 2007), and the organisations that were involved in this research did not make demands of the researcher other than that ethical approval had been granted.

Additionally, the data presented in the study is from the point of view of alleged perpetrators of ASB. Whilst, in many cases, tenant participants were also complainants of ASB, it is very possible they have different experiences and perceptions of the ASB procedure than the tenants who raised a complaint about them or the landlord managing the ASB complaint. Whilst Key Informants were interviewed to provide context for the study, focus is unapologetically from the perspective of alleged perpetrators of ASB whose voices have routinely been absent from debates on ASB.

Finally, whilst tenants were approached shortly after a new ASB case had been opened, they had often experienced numerous ASB interventions throughout the course of their tenancy. This meant that a number of 'new' cases actually appeared to be historic with new reports of ASB added to preceding cases rather than being completely new. Tenants often drew upon their experience of previous interventions in their interviews, relying on accurate memory and understanding of the interventions used in the past. For the most part, however, this did not appear to be too much of an issue, with tenants able to 'refresh' their memory with letters and to take their time to remember before they tried to answer a question.

Similarly, a number of new reports of ASB regarding tenant participants were made during the research period and it would have been useful to return to the tenants at another date in the future to explore the ASB process more fully after additional reports of ASB had been made. As Neale (2019) highlights, in qualitative longitudinal research, there is often no analytical saturation as the lives and experiences of participants continue to develop. However, the limited timespan for undertaking a PhD meant it was only possible to do two waves of qualitative longitudinal interviews, although this still provided a good window in which to explore the ASB process.

4.8: Conclusion

In summary, in order to meet the research aims and answer the research questions, a qualitative, longitudinal research project was conducted with social tenants alleged to be engaged with ASB, alongside single contextual interviews with Key Informants from within stakeholder organisations. These methods were strongly aligned with the interpretivist epistemological and constructivist ontological assumptions of the researcher. Purposive sampling was applied, with access to social tenants and Key Informants arranged through the use of stakeholder organisations. Alongside a small sample size, this ensured relevance to the topic and depth of analysis (Emmel, 2013). There was diversity of gender and (dis)ability within the sample and attempts were made to recruit participants from BME backgrounds by recruiting a BME housing association however, this was unfortunately unsuccessful. The data gathered from the qualitative interviews was subject to extensive data analysis, including case, thematic (both conceptual and temporal) and integrative analysis using NVivo.

The project was subject to stringent ethical guidelines and practices with particular attention paid to informed consent, safety of the tenant participants and safety of the researcher. Additionally, attempts were made to counteract the power imbalance of an interview, with tenants given the opportunity to ask questions to the researcher and asked to reflect on what they had said to the researcher in order to ask for anything to be removed from the transcript (Mason, 2002; Oakley, 1981). As tenant participants were also alleged perpetrators of ASB, with the risk they could feel influenced to take part in the research under the assumption it would impact their ASB case, informed consent was of particular importance, ensuring tenants understood they did not have to take part and their engagement (or lack of) would not impact their ASB case, social housing tenancy or any other services they received. As the researcher had previously worked as a housing officer, a reflection on the impact of this on the research project was provided within the ethical considerations section.

As the fieldwork took place within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, changes had to be made to the research design and the additional strain of living in a pandemic for both researcher and participant was felt. However, the majority of

tenants were still willing to take part in the research and the project was adapted to ensure it remained ethically sound and viable. The following three chapters present the findings and analysis from the project, starting with experiences of the ASB policy in practice.

Chapter 5: Defining ASB on the ground

This chapter presents analysis of tenant and Key Informant (KI) interviews related to how the ASB policy is operationalised and experienced in practice, addressing the first two research questions related to defining ASB and how ASB interventions are experienced and perceived by those alleged to be engaged in ASB. Tenant vignettes, offering a brief overview of tenant stories, can be found in Appendix 10. Firstly, in this chapter, how ASB is defined in practice by alleged perpetrators and landlords is explored, finding little agreement between participants, suggesting the definitional issues in policy highlighted in Chapter 2 continue to present problems in practice. The following section explores the impact of the built environment and how poor quality environment can lead to increased reports of noise nuisance and neighbour conflict. It also highlights how understanding neighbour relations are vital to understanding how ASB is defined in practice, with 'good' neighbour relations potentially leading to fewer reports of ASB whilst, in contrast, 'bad' neighbour relations can lead to an increased sensitivity to the behaviour of others (especially where neighbour behaviour is more noticeable due to close proximity). Finally, the chapter considers uneven experiences related to the definition of ASB, highlighting how alleged perpetrators are often increasingly vulnerable related to victimisation of both crime and ASB, with little support offered to them from their landlord. This is followed by a related discussion regarding ASB and housing tenure, with the behaviour of private households not subject to the same level of scrutiny as social tenants. Throughout this chapter, analysis repeatedly returns to how issues with definition leads to problems of implementation.

5.1: Definitional issues

Tenants and Key Informants named a diverse range of behaviours (eighteen categories) which they classed as ASB, outlined in Table 5 below. The table also shows where responses to the behaviour may also fall under the remit of other law or enforcement agencies such as the police or Local Authority Environmental Agencies. Thirteen of the eighteen behaviours reported could overlap with the responsibilities of other agencies which could lead to the double punishment of social tenants alleged to be engaged in these behaviours, with the potential of sanction from both their landlord and another service (Atkinson, 2006). There was

also overlap between some of the categories of behaviour noted, such as alcohol-related nuisance or failure to control visitors, both of which may also, on some occasions, lead to noise nuisance. The large number of behaviours identified and the lack of agreement highlights the diversity of behaviour that emerges from the lack of a definitive statement in policy about what ASB is.

Table 5: A table to show categories of behaviour reported by participants and overlap with other areas of law

Category of behaviour	Includes:	Number of Participants	Number of Key Informants	Overlap with other agencies or areas of law
Alcohol related	Acting inebriated, drinking in public or other category of ASB (e.g., noise) in conjunction with alcohol	4	2	
Animal nuisance	Owning pets without landlord permission, dog fouling	1	1	Dog fouling - Environmental agency
CCTV related	Cameras facing neighbours' property	2	0	
Children and youth nuisance	Noise from children playing outside or in the house, young people hanging around outside	2	0	
Failure to control of visitors	Large groups of visitors or frequent visitors whose behaviour is not controlled by tenant.	2	0	
Damage to property	Graffiti, not reporting repairs, causing damage to window, doors or walls	2	1	Criminal damage - criminal law
Does not exist	As ASB is not illegal behaviour it does not include any behaviour	1	0	
Drug-related	Drug dealing, growing or use, as well as other category of ASB (e.g., noise) in conjunction with drug use	4	3	Criminal law
Fly tipping	Fly tipping of furniture or household waste (not in own garden)	2	0	Environmental agency
Garden nuisance	Rubbish in garden, overgrown garden, fires in garden or high fence which blocks out light to neighbours' garden	3	2	Environmental agency
Intimidation	Making neighbour feel intimidated or unsafe	2	1	Criminal law
Noise – household noise	Noise on stairs, slamming doors, loud footsteps, being loud enough for neighbours to hear, TV or loud voices and arguments	8	4	Environmental agency
Noise – late night parties and loud music	Late night parties, regular parties and may also include loud music	6	2	Environmental agency
Online	Being unpleasant or rude online	1	0	When severe, covered by criminal law related to intimidation or harassment
Physical violence	Fighting, physical violence or attempted physical violence	1	2	Criminal law
Trespassing on property	Going into someone else's garden or property without permission	1	0	Criminal law
Vehicle nuisance	Parking in disabled bay without disabled badge, parking in someone else's allocated bay or driveway, parking illegally	2	2	Local Authorities can manage illegal parking
Verbal abuse and offensive language	Swearing or being rude, verbal abuse and threats or being verbally aggressive	3	2	Criminal law related to intimidation or harassment

As shown in the table above, with the exception of noise, which was split into two categories of household noise and late night parties/loud music noise (see section

5.2.1 below for a discussion on noise), there was very little agreement amongst participants about which specific behaviours could be defined as ASB. Instead, both tenants and Key Informants tended to lean towards broader definitions that could be interpreted in many different ways (discussed below). Whilst perhaps this is to be expected given the unclear definition in policy, the lack of agreement of specific behaviours that are categorised as ASB can cause confusion amongst tenants about how they are expected to behave (Lister, 2006). One tenant stated ASB did not exist, referencing the idea that nuisance behaviour can be seen as a social construct and used as a means to control certain groups within the general population (Becker, 1966). Moving on from specific behaviours, the remainder of this section focuses on the broader definitions provided by tenants and Key Informants.

5.1.1: Common sense?

Half the tenants interviewed were unsure how to define ASB, said it was "hard to define", or simply that they didn't know what was classed as antisocial.

> *"It's not that clear. I always thought it was something quite bad until you started getting into the nitty gritty, and then it's like, what?"* (Mel, Wave A).

Key Informants, on the other hand, often suggested either that it was obvious or common sense which behaviours constituted as nuisance, echoing the politicians' argument referred to in Chapter 2, section 2.2 of knowing ASB when you see it (Carr and Cowan, 2006) or that the definition in the tenancy agreements, which generally included a slightly edited version of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 or Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 definition, was self-explanatory and needed no further detail.

> *"What is antisocial behaviour is well-established and 'works' – the language makes sense"* (ASB Manager, Large Housing Association).

> *"In our policy we're very clear on what is antisocial behaviour and what isn't"* (Neighbourhood Services Manager, Small Organisation).

From the perspectives of tenants, however, the standard definition was not as self-explanatory as Key Informants stated. This highlights that for many tenants, as noted widely in previous research (Blandy, 2006; Carr and Cowan, 2006; Mackenzie et al.,

2010; Warburton et al., 1997), the definition of ASB is not clear cut or simple common sense. Whilst tenants may be aware of the official definition or the definition that is in their tenancy agreement, this does not necessarily translate into the same understanding of it as their neighbours, their landlord or their wider community.

5.1.2: Preventing reasonable enjoyment of the home

Six tenants suggested ASB is something that prevents other people's enjoyment of their home or disruption for other people's daily life, rather than specific behaviour. This was supported by the definitions provided by Key Informants who also gave broad descriptions.

> *"Anything that causes anybody else annoyance and a nuisance – and disturbs them from their everyday life in enough for them to complain really"* (ASB Manager, Local Authority).

> *"If someone was, you know, behaving in a way that was causing me to feel alarmed or distressed or unhappy with them, you know?"* (Neighbourhood Services Manager, Small Housing Association).

These definitions appear to reference the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, with the words nuisance, alarm and distress, where ASB appears to be what those witnessing perceive it as, rather than a specific list of behaviours. By keeping this response broad and vague, it allows any behaviour to potentially fall into the category of ASB (Blandy, 2006; Carr and Cowan, 2006; Mackenzie et al., 2010; Warburton et al., 1997).

> *"One of the ones we had recently, it was someone going out for work in the morning, so they left the house at 6 o'clock, erm you know walking about – there was a single guy upstairs, a pair of boots like this we can't – he's not wearing high heels, erm it's just the impact noise erm so he put some rugs down but you could still hear it" (*Neighbourhood Services Manager, Small Organisation).

The example above shows a tenant who was deemed antisocial for going to work at a time that was seen as unreasonable. Whilst the sound of someone walking in work boots may have been heard by neighbours, going to work is usually perceived as responsible rather than antisocial (and therefore constructed as irresponsible)

behaviour (Crossley, 2018; 2018a; Mead, 1997). A similar case managed by the Local Authority involved in this study, where a tenant used their washing machine in the early evening because they were at work through the day, was closed without any action as the allegation was deemed as not ASB, showing how what is seen as antisocial is not consistent between landlords and highlights problems of structural issues or poor-quality housing being erroneously identified as individuals behaving in an antisocial manner. This poor quality housing can lead to it being more likely that residents in social housing estates experience noise from their neighbours that can impact their enjoyment of their own homes (see section 5.2 below and Chapter 2, section 2.2.1).

5.1.3: Different for everyone

Five tenants suggested understandings of ASB could change depending on who witnessed it, highlighting the multiple possible interpretations of the broad definition provided in policy.

> *"I think that could cause a lot of problems to be honest, I think 'cos everyone has their own opinion and every opinion's different"* (Caroline, Wave A).

Three tenants felt their landlord defined ASB as anything a tenant complains about. For these tenants, relying on what other people viewed as antisocial was not a reliable definition, leading to a waste of time and resources.

> *"As anything that a complainant sees it as – so if someone feels they've had antisocial behaviour, the landlord seems to think that's worth backing… It's a waste of their money and you know, court's time, everyone's time"* (Charlie, Wave A).

Some tenants gave examples of what they perceived as petty complaints that had been made about them, including being "offended" as Charlie (Wave A) greeted them in the street, having a soft drink can in the window (Amelia, Wave A) and using the "wrong" door (Pauline, Wave A). For these tenants, that the landlord listened to these complaints and opened ASB cases was evidence their landlords did not adequately consider the substance or validity of the complaints made against them. This also led to a feeling of disempowerment as these tenants (and others accused

of ASB) felt their neighbours had a lot of power of them. They believed their neighbours could complain about anything, however mundane, and it would fall under the remit of ASB policy (see Chapter 6, section 6.1.1 for further discussion related to disempowering experiences).

Key Informants also recognised issues of simply investigating ASB based on complainant definitions as landlord and tenant definitions could vary, reporting the necessity of managing the expectations of complainants.

> *"I think we have quite often made judgements and gone back to the complainant and said, you know, this is what we would expect from someone living in a property. It's not unreasonable for someone to flush a toilet at 2 o'clock in the morning"* (Neighbourhood Services Manager, Local Authority).

> *"Different people have different things. Sometimes perhaps part of our investigation is managing that expectation"* (ASB Manager, Local Authority).

These quotes highlight how the current broad definition of ASB is unsatisfactory as tenants and stakeholders fail to agree on what is antisocial. This raises the question of who gets to decide what is antisocial; as Millie (2008) pointed out, simply using the perceptions of those with the most power can take away the rights of more marginalised groups. Ultimately, the data suggests that priority is given first to the social landlord's definition of ASB, with Key Informant discussion on managing expectations or making judgements suggesting they do not simply accept a complainant definition of nuisance behaviour. Nevertheless, complainant definitions were viewed as important, with the Local Authority ASB manager quoted in section 5.1.2 above stating ASB was anything that disturbed a tenant "enough for them to complain". Noticeably missing is recognition of the alleged perpetrators views of what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour in their home or from their neighbours, suggesting their perceptions and experiences of nuisance behaviour are viewed as of lesser (if not non-existent) importance.

5.1.4: Housing officer discretion

The individual housing officer of eight different tenant participants changed during their tenancy. Some simply no longer knew who was managing the case or their tenancy.

> *"I couldn't tell you. If you wanted to give me a million quid, you'd keep it"* (Harry, Wave B).

This change in housing officer led to tenants having to inform the new housing officer what had happened previously, despite any current or closed ASB case presumably kept on record somewhere.

> *"You were just lost. And this would come through and you'd feel you have to sit on the phone for another two hours whilst at work, and explain, going backwards, over and over, and over and over, cos it's such a big story, you could go on for hours and still not get to the bottom of it all. So, yeah, it's a nightmare"* (Mel, Wave A).

A change in housing officer also sometimes meant a change in the way tenancies or ASB reports were managed. As highlighted in Chapter 2, section 2.2, leaving the definition of ASB in policy open to interpretation by housing officers means 'street level bureaucrats' use their discretionary powers to manage the ASB cases they receive (Brown, 2013; Lipsky, 2010). Amelia reflected on how one housing officer gave her permission to put up CCTV cameras, however, when another housing officer took over, she was made to take them down.

> *"A different housing officer came on board and he gave us approval [for CCTV]. He wasn't there for long and then the old housing officer came back... said that we had to remove the CCTV because we didn't have permission"* (Amelia, Wave A).

Again, whilst evidence that permission for CCTV had been granted should have been kept on record, this example suggests that permission was either not recorded or was retracted. This was frustrating for Amelia and other tenants who reported similar experiences. Rosie's ASB case had been managed by many different housing officers over time.

"It's, like, been a mixture, basically, a mixture of messages from different, you know, people" (Rosie, Wave B).

Each housing officer managed the case differently, with one telling her simply to ignore her neighbour and the complaints as there was no evidence, whilst another started eviction proceedings against her.

"They didn't know me, they didn't know her next door. It was someone called [Housing Officer Name] what came when I was getting evicted… and I didn't know her" (Rosie, Wave A).

Whilst Rosie successfully appealed against the eviction, the fact that these two housing officers had viewed the same evidence and decided on such conflicting courses of action, again, highlights the definitional problems of ASB in practice, with what is deemed antisocial varying between staff within the same organisation. This variation can demonstrably have significant implications on the ground for tenants on the receiving end of ASB interventions implemented on the basis of the discretionary powers available to front-line staff.

5.2: The built environment, noise and neighbour conflict

Tenants discussed their built environment consistently through their interviews, highlighting issues of poor quality sound proofing, feeling spied upon by their neighbours (due to a lack of privacy either in their property, garden, communal area or street) and frequent neighbour interaction. These issues impacted what behaviours were noticed, experienced and then reported as ASB, supporting the discussion offered in Chapter 2, sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

5.2.1: Noise, housing and the built environment

As highlighted in Table 5 above, noise was a particularly pervasive category of nuisance and therefore provides a useful example to consider in more detail alongside issues of the built environment. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2.1, noise is a commonly complained about occurrence internationally (Hong et al., 2020; Stokoe and Hepburn, 2005; Ureta, 2007; Yao, 2018). The term noise, or noisy, is not neutral, but can be theorised as a socially constructed phenomena which generally comes with negative connotations (Stokoe and Hepburn, 2005). Sound or noise is

subjective, interpreted differently by different people and dependant on temporal, spatial and moral context (Hong et al., 2020; Stokoe and Hepburn, 2005). Noise, of course, does not just come from neighbours, but also from construction, traffic, businesses and other visitors to, or residents, in the neighbourhood. Excessive noise can have negative impacts on auditory health as well as mental and physical health and, additionally, has been argued to sometimes lead to verbal, psychological and physical conflict between neighbours (Hong et al., 2020). Nevertheless, noise, from a range of different sources, is an everyday factor of life and living with noise is accepted as part of living within a town, city or countryside, albeit the sounds may be different. Whilst households may hear noise coming from outside their home or from within their neighbour's home, this may not always be related to excessive noise but could, instead, be related to their built environment and, in particular, poor quality housing (García Ruiz and South, 2019).

Six tenants stated complaints of ASB made against them were related to their properties being of poor quality, with a lack of insulation and soundproofing between properties. For example, Rosie's neighbour complained about her children running up and down the stairs, which Rosie said she understood, as the houses "are like cardboard" (Rosie, Wave A). Harry made a complaint about his neighbour who he said had "heavy feet" (Harry, Wave A), however, he believed the reason he could hear her was because the flats were poor quality. For these tenants, the landlord's role in responding to the complaints should be to improve the quality of the property.

"I think there's too much concentration on behaviour, say like where music's concerned, you can put soundproof – you could soundproof every flat. Nobody could ever complain 'bout anyone, it'd be cheaper than all of these court cases and no one ever would have any hassle with each other" (Charlie, Wave A).

Tenants felt this was an obvious solution to multiple noise complaints that were being reported, rather than focusing on individual behaviour. Whilst soundproofing all properties may not be feasible for social landlords in a time of economic constraint, multiple Key Informants suggested the lack of carpets in some tenants' homes (often due to tenant poverty, highlighting how vulnerability can lead to an increased likelihood of being accused of ASB) were leading to increased noise transference between properties.

"Particularly in flats and particularly now we – we get less and less people [who] seem to be able to carpet their upstairs flat" (Neighbourhood Services Manager, Local Authority).

In one instance related to a lack of carpets, as alluded to in the quote above, the Local Authority had arranged and paid for carpets to be fitted in a flat where a tenant could not afford to do so. Whilst this does suggest a willingness on the landlords' part to look at alternate responses to ASB complaints and to fund carpeting properties to avoid further complaints, everyday household noise was still, here, viewed as antisocial, and a lack of funds resulting in allegations of ASB, similar to Bond-Taylor's (2016) study discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4. This focus on individual behaviour leads to individual sanctions, even where there appears to be little evidence of loud levels of noise. Charlie described how sound monitors were installed to monitor noise from his property after he had received a warning letter for ASB. Despite the sound monitors not picking up any sound above what was described as "normal household noise", his neighbour continued to report noise nuisance and Charlie was taken to court for a legal injunction. Whilst Charlie successfully appealed this injunction, this example highlights how individuals may be sanctioned for structural problems (such as living in poor quality homes at close proximity to others), even where there appears to be little (or no) evidence of excessive noise.

Another issue with the built environment was a lack of parking, which one Key Informant reflected was partly due to estates being built without multiple-car households in mind.

"I'd say on average probably about 3 cars for a large family and where do you park them all? These schemes are not made to park more than two maybe" (Housing Manager, City Organisation).

Part of the complaint made against husband-and-wife Barry and Kerry had been related to Barry's work vehicle parked outside their neighbour's house. Whilst it was on a public road and not blocking a driveway, the neighbour had reported the couple for ASB. Despite Barry being unable to park in front of his own home due to parking

restrictions there, this was viewed as antisocial by his neighbour and landlord. Barry pointed out that he had "got to park it somewhere" (Barry, Wave A).

The issues in this section were related to the built environment, however, they all resulted in an ASB case being opened against individual tenants, suggesting the individual's behaviour was perceived as at fault. Structural issues such as lack of soundproofing, lack of parking and in some cases, tenant vulnerability in the form of poverty (resulting in an inability to carpet the property) appear to be routinely managed as individual irresponsibility and a failure to meet behavioural expectations. These structural issues are more likely to be an issue in social housing estates and areas of deprivation, where the built environment is often of a poorer quality (Cheshire and Buglar, 2015). This shifts the responsibility of the landlord to provide good quality homes that meet the needs of their tenants (Costarelli, Kleinhans and Mugnano, 2020; Cowan, 2011) onto individuals, who are very unlikely to have the means to resolve issues of the built environment. It also highlights that a focus on individual behaviour, whilst relevant in some situations, is not the cause or the solution to a host of problems that currently fall under the remit of ASB policy. As highlighted in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.2), this generally poorer quality housing comes alongside close proximity to neighbours, leading to an increased likelihood of neighbour interaction and, subsequently, conflict. It is these (often strained) neighbour relations that this chapter now explores.

5.2.2: Neighbour relations and ASB

A significant majority of tenants (11) had some form of relationship with their neighbours before the first complaint of ASB was instigated, whether it was positive or negative. Some had previously had a fairly positive relationship with their neighbours, helping them by taking packages in or helping with the garden, however, the relationship went sour. As discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.2.2), when neighbour relationships that were previously good or neutral experience conflict or dispute, becoming 'bad' relationships, longstanding behaviours that have the potential to cause nuisance increased in importance for neighbours and instead of being seen as unintentional can begin to be seen as intentional and retaliatory (Cheshire et al., 2021). When neighbours fell out, they no longer spoke directly to

each other and instead called the landlord if they had an issue with their neighbour. This was also alluded to in Key Informant interviews.

"All that stuff that they did [before, when we were friends] were acceptable then but now we're not friends we don't like it, we didn't like it from the start" (ASB Manager, Local Authority).

For others, the relationship with their neighbours had never been positive.

"All these dirty looks and it's all she's ever been like. It's been like that from day one, but see, it's 'cos her friend wasn't in my house, that's what I think it was" (Rosie, Wave A).

Rosie believed her neighbour's friend had applied for the same property that Rosie was now living in and that her neighbour was annoyed that her friend had not been successful for it, whereas Rosie had been. Four others reported not being 'liked' by their neighbours from as soon as they (or the complainant) moved in. This simple dislike or falling out with another person appeared to make their behaviour seem unreasonable, resulting in complaints to the landlord. This was accepted by Key Informants as a common occurrence.

"The complainants are saying something but they might just be doing it [complaining] because they don't like the neighbours" (Housing Manager, City Organisation).

At the first interview, Harry described how his formerly positive relationship with his neighbour had deteriorated and his neighbour had made an ASB complaint. Whilst he said he could not remember what the complaint was about, he remembered raising a counter-complaint about noise nuisance and an untidy garden.

"Well, it's full of bloody rubbish. There's a rabbit run, rabbit hutch, hammock, two trees. She's put them all in front of the window, but still nothing's happened" (Harry, Wave A).

Harry was told that his complaints did not meet the threshold for ASB as perceived by his housing officer which made him feel angry.

"She said, "Well I can't do much Harry, I don't think." I said, "Well somebody's going to have to do something, or else I shall be going 'round there with some gear and ramshackle the bloody lot." "Well, you can't do that," she said. "Well, you bloody watch me. If you don't do it, I will" (Harry, Wave A).

At the time of the second interview, however, Harry and his neighbour had become friendly again, partly as a result of the Covid-19 lockdown.

"Everything's calmed down. The lass upstairs is back on form, if you like to put it in them words. We speak every day. In fact, I went up to see her this morning because I couldn't hear nowt. I thought she wasn't – I know she isn't very well, like, but, anyway, she's okay" (Harry, Wave B).

Whilst Harry used to complain about hearing his neighbour above, he instead went to check that she was okay because he hadn't heard her. Whilst the noise hadn't changed, his perception of it had; he no longer found the sound of his neighbour moving around the flat a nuisance. There were also still items in the garden, though he no longer felt frustrated by this.

"Yes well, there's still one or two things in front of the window but I haven't said nowt" (Harry, Wave B).

Harry's example shows clearly how relationships between neighbours can impact what is seen as antisocial. One other tenant reported improved relationships with their neighbours after the neighbours returned a wallet they had lost in the street. A more positive relationship can result in behaviours previously viewed as nuisance being accepted. On these occasions, the relationship between neighbours improved over time without landlord or other third-party involvement (although the Covid-19 pandemic, subsequent lockdown and a missing wallet did encourage the neighbours to speak to each other again), suggesting ASB interventions are not always needed to successfully resolve neighbour disputes. As found by Cheshire and Buglar (2015), social tenants may be more likely to have more intense and durable relationships with their neighbours, developed through frequent interaction as a result of the close proximity caused by living within high density social housing estates. This increased interaction can, however, also lead to increased opportunity for social conflict or dispute.

Overall, nine tenants asserted the ASB complaints about them could have been effectively dealt with through informal conversations with their neighbours and did not warrant the formal involvement of services which they felt could potentially exacerbate or prolong neighbour disagreements. As Pauline stated:

"I think once you start involving third parties it brings up all other issues… people become very defensive when you're bringing in a third party as like an umpire between who's right and who's wrong" (Pauline, Wave B).

Tenants believed neighbours speaking to each other when there was an issue would lead to more positive resolutions in the future too.

"Until somebody's actually gonna sit down and listen to you and to actually understand how you're talking and how you're thinking nobody's gonna get on, ever in a million years" (Kerry, Wave A).

In Michael's first interview, he reported persistent noise nuisance from his neighbour which disturbed him and his family. He had attempted to report this to his landlord but had struggled to engage with the process. However, by the second interview, he had spoken to his neighbour about the problem, and the issue had been resolved.

"I had words with him, and then since I had words with him it quietened down" (Michael, Wave B).

Michael said he spoke to his neighbour "how I normally speak to him, and all of a sudden, it just stopped" (Michael, Wave B). He now had a more positive relationship with his neighbour and no longer felt he was a victim of ASB. Michael, and others in this study, felt that on many occasions, social landlords should not have any involvement, and the onus should be on neighbours to speak to each other. Whilst this may not always work (or may take time, as both Michael's and Harry's experiences showed), tenants and Key Informants alike felt it was important for neighbours to speak directly to each other rather than raise ASB complaints. As what is seen as antisocial appears to be closely linked with neighbour relations, building up a relationship where neighbours are able to speak to each other to resolve problems could potentially reduce the number of ASB cases reported and improve feelings of ontological security (further discussed in Chapter 7, section 7.3).

5.2.3: Neighbour relations and landlord intervention: mediation

Whilst mediation is not appropriate in all cases, for example when issues such as power imbalances and feelings of victimhood are present (Burney, 2005; Mackenzie et al., 2010; Nixon and Hunter, 2001), tenants and Key Informants alike were generally positive about the idea of mediation to resolve neighbour disputes and ASB reports. However, whilst Key Informants stated mediation was offered in the majority of ASB cases, only two tenants were offered mediation; one by their landlord and one by the police, suggesting this intervention is not routinely offered in practice.

> *"I said I'd do mediation, and she said, well, that looks good on my side and positive and I said, 'Well I'll do anything for an easy life'"* (Rosie, Wave A).

Rosie's neighbour, however, was not willing to engage in the mediation offered by the landlord and, therefore, it did not go ahead. Amelia, after years of reporting issues with, and receiving allegations of ASB from, her shared-ownership neighbours to her landlord and the police, received mediation from the police. This took place during the Covid-19 lockdown and was conducted over the garden fence by two police officers. Amelia found the mediation frustrating as she did not feel her neighbours were willing to accept some of the issues she was having. She also found the other party aggressive and felt she wasn't able to have her say.

> *"It didn't exactly go well… the son was quite aggressive, and it was very difficult to get your side across"* (Amelia, Wave B).

It is not clear whether the police officers were trained mediators or whether it was unusual for them to be conducting the mediation, which could explain why Amelia was not able to fully express her concerns. Despite this, the noise and intimidation issues Amelia reported did appear to have been alleviated after mediation was completed. However, Amelia was fearful this would not last, and she could still smell cannabis in her living room coming from her neighbour's property.

> *"I know it's quiet but you know sometimes where there's still things like, for instance, the smoking of weed still happens. And because I wasn't allowed to bring it up, you know, things like that, because she's not prepared to listen to it.*

You know, these things were something that were relevant and something that,
you know, everybody has the right to inside their own home, but why haven't I?"
(Amelia, Wave B).

As highlighted by Stokoe and Wallwork (2003), when a neighbour's behaviour
encroaches on personal space, such as a smell that permeates through the wall, this
can have a particularly detrimental effect on an individual's feeling of being 'at home'
and in control of their own space (the impact of intervention and ASB on alleged
perpetrators' ontological security is discussed in Chapter 7, section 7.3). Although, in
Amelia's' case, she did not feel mediation was successful, this did take place after a
long period of complaints and counter-complaints between her and her neighbour.
Other tenants were generally positive about the idea of mediation but stated it had
not been offered to them

"If I've had issues with this neighbour and that neighbour's saying they've got
issues with me, I'd want to get them two together, I'd want to sit them down, I'd
want to try and resolve it. I'd want to try and put their issues aside and have done
with it so that we can both move forward because respectively, we've all got to
live there, we've all got to raise these children there. But [Landlord] have not done
that" (Caroline, Wave A).

Alternatively, some tenants, whilst wishing mediation had been offered, were unsure
that it would work.

"That would be a good thing but yet it depends if the neighbour would listen to that
person 'cos some people just let it go through one ear and out the other and think
I'm not bothered, I do my thing it's – so it might not work…" (Michael, Wave A).

Whilst accepting the limitations of mediation, it appears tenants felt they would
benefit from its more consistent, early use in ASB cases, particularly when, as this
analysis has shown, neighbour relations appear to be both a key trigger of ASB
complaints and an important mechanism for ASB resolution over time.

5.3: Uneven experiences: who is a perpetrator of ASB?

Previous studies have identified the unclear boundary between victim and perpetrator, with many alleged perpetrators of ASB also victims of violence, crime and other ASB (Bond-Taylor, 2016; Flint, 2018; Jones et al., 2006; Nixon and Parr, 2006; Scott, 2006). This is supported by the findings of this study which highlight the apparently arbitrary classifications of victim and perpetrator and, in many cases, highlight the vulnerability of those who receive ASB intervention, both in terms of victimisation and housing-tenure inequalities stemming from poverty.

5.3.1: Victim of crime

Around half the tenants interviewed had recently been a victim of crime, including criminal damage, burglary, harassment, domestic abuse (see Chapter 7, section 7.4 in relation to domestic abuse) and physical assault with a weapon. Some of these were by the complainant of ASB and others were from within the household or external to the area.

"I had a bloody thief in, but… I had him on the bloody camera" (Harry, Wave A).

Harry, above, had a complaint made about him for having CCTV on his property. He explained to his landlord that this was because of burglaries in the area but his housing officer told him it would not be usable evidence if a burglary did happen. When Harry was a victim of burglary, his CCTV evidence was used to find and charge the perpetrator which made Harry question the knowledge of his landlord in general and his housing officer in particular.

Two tenants reported having their cars damaged by their neighbours. Barry's neighbour's son allegedly damaged the cars parked on their street one night, reportedly causing over £10,000 worth of damage. When Barry and his wife, Kerry, knocked on their neighbour's door to confront them, the neighbours called their landlord to report ASB.

"The housing officer came out because she [the neighbour] had reported me. Apparently, I was supposed to be knocking on her door right, left and centre, morning, noon and night" (Barry, Wave A).

When he told his housing officer about the vehicle damage, she said she had not heard about it but would investigate. Barry did not hear anything further regarding the complaint about him or about any action against his neighbours.

Amelia's car was also damaged. This incident happened after she had made an ASB complaint about her neighbours.

> *"Because we'd made a complaint about them, they went and slashed my husband's tyres"* (Amelia, Wave A).

Amelia reported this to the police and the landlord but no action was taken against her neighbours as there was not enough evidence to pursue the report. She then received an allegation of ASB for accusing her neighbours of slashing the tyres. For these tenants, not only were they a victim of crime, but they were accused of perpetrating ASB when they responded to said crime, prompting questions related to the legitimacy of enforcement action. No tenants were referred to Victim Support or other support services related to these crimes.

5.3.2: Victim of ASB

The majority of tenants (11) felt they had experienced ASB themselves from current or former neighbours. Many believed the neighbours who had complained about them were antisocial. For example, Caroline made a complaint about her neighbour related to noise nuisance and drinking alcohol but since then, she had received allegations that she was a perpetrator of ASB (as in a number of other examples highlighted in this analysis). She felt this was retaliatory and unjust as she was regularly disturbed by parties at her neighbour's house.

> *"From me making the complaint about my neighbour on the left of me and the people going into her property drinking alcohol and knocking on my door, causing issues for myself and intimidating me in my own home, it's been spun on its head"* (Caroline, Wave A).

Caroline described how she felt her lack of familial support led to her finding it harder to make allegations about her neighbours or refute the claims made about her own behaviour as she didn't feel she had anyone supporting her, highlighting feelings of disempowerment and vulnerability. 10 tenants taking part in this research said they

preferred not to make complaints to the landlord about the disturbances they had, at least until a complaint had been made about them.

"I should report her and she should get done for that [shouting], but I don't want to be a complainer. I feel that if I leave her alone and I don't complain she might leave me alone. But it's not working out like that [laughs]" (Rosie, Wave A).

Tenants reported wanting to avoid involvement with their neighbours further than simple greetings, saying they "keep themselves to themselves". The belief that complainants of ASB were "nosy" (Rangers, Wave A) or "complainers" (Rosie, Wave A) seemed to build an 'us' and 'them' rhetoric, distancing these tenants from those who had made complaints about them. This could be linked to Nixon and Parr's (2006) findings that complainants also built up 'us' and 'them' classifications, demonising alleged perpetrators of ASB. By these tenants separating themselves from the 'others' that make complaints, this could help them to push back against allegations of ASB, which can be humiliating and upsetting.

"It does suit that sort of person though doesn't it, who's got nothing better to do but complain about their neighbours. They've been given whole offices of people who are willing to listen to them and run with it" (Charlie, Wave A).

This quote from Charlie shows how he felt the ASB procedure presented an opportunity for certain people to speak to someone who had to listen to their complaints.

5.3.3: Not reporting ASB

Those that chose not to raise new ASB complaints about their neighbours were told by their housing officers and other front-line staff that there was nothing else that could be done for them. Tenants such as Rosie and Charlie, who had received multiple allegations of ASB which they found unreasonable had asked if there was anything they could do to stop more complaints being raised where there had been no evidence of nuisance found by the landlord or other agencies (both tenants had also successfully appealed against legal action from their landlord: Charlie, an ASB injunction and Rosie, a Notice of Seeking Possession). Charlie's landlord told him he had to raise a new ASB complaint against his neighbour.

"[It] is a strange system to isn't it? You know, I've got to put in a fresh complaint stating that my neighbour's erm, being unreasonable about me, as opposed to it being just a response to her complaint about me which it really is. It isn't a fresh complaint" (Charlie, Wave A).

Whilst Charlie was unwilling to raise a complaint about his neighbour, the landlord was unwilling to consider his comments as a response to the complaint about him. Rosie was similarly told she needed to make a complaint and get evidence of harassment in response to the regular allegations that were made against her. Like Charlie, Rosie was unwilling.

"I just don't want the hassle, yeah, because in some ways, if they believe me, I don't think I should because I don't feel like I should make complaints" (Rosie, Wave B).

Pauline also reflected on this practice of asking tenants to make a new complaint, believing it prolonged disputes between neighbours.

"I wouldn't have wanted to take it further to be honest. I think in some cases it's just prolonging disagreements and things following that route. I think it's a last resort, to start to make things official and put complaints in" (Pauline, Wave B).

Many tenants found the process of making a complaint difficult to navigate. For some, it was simply too time consuming when they felt they had enough difficulties to manage.

"I goes "Listen," I goes, "I don't complain about all this." And she said, "Well you need to start writing it down." Who's got the time to think?" (Rosie, Wave B).

For Rosie, who was already reluctant to make a complaint about her neighbour, the idea of writing down the issues she had had with her neighbour was more than she was willing (or able) to engage with when she felt she did not have the "time to think", let alone monitor her neighbour's behaviour. Similarly, Michael, who was receiving treatment for cancer at the time of the first interview, stated:

"It's like noise that we hear, put a noise box on [the] wall and that'll record everything. [Housing officer said] "Oh, we can't do that, you need to record it in

writing." I says, "Well I'm not gonna – I'm not gonna do a job that you're meant to do when you've got things that can be put in place [instead of me writing down complaints]… like voice recordings and you can record every noise and it will record times and dates" (Michael, Wave A).

The insistence that tenants physically write down complaints of nuisance is problematic, especially where all these tenants interviewed could be classed as vulnerable (see Chapter 7, Table 7), managing their own health needs, running a household whilst in poverty or caring for children. The need to write things down introduces a barrier to raising complaints or responding to the complaints about themselves, assuming time, knowledge of the process and literacy skills. Knowledge of the process did appear to be a key barrier to tenants wishing to make complaints.

"I don't think I could go down that route. I wouldn't even know where to start" (Rachel, Wave B).

One Key Informant recognised this issue, stating certain tenants receive support from their landlords and the police as they understand the process of making and escalating complaints, suggesting those who are (relatively) less vulnerable may find it easier to navigate the ASB procedure and receive support.

"They don't understand that process, the other people do. They [people who understand the process] get the more resources and they get dealt with first" (Housing Manager, City Organisation).

Three tenants stated they wished they had a better understanding of the procedures of their landlord and were unsure how they could get this information, highlighting that these tenants did not have knowledge or understanding of the processes of their landlord in relation to ASB, how they were managed or how to make a complaint.

"To be quite honest love, I would like to know how they do deal with antisocial behaviour" (Barry, Wave B).

This leads to only certain tenants having the resources to access support from their landlord as complainants of ASB, allowing them to define what is antisocial and introducing barriers to (often vulnerable) tenants wishing to deny allegations or raise

counter-issues about their neighbours. Whilst some tenants may have the time and resources to raise complaints about their neighbours, it appears that in order to deny allegations of ASB, further expectations and conditions are placed on tenants who are already managing complex lives, made harder by poverty, crime and ASB interventions. These social tenants face additional expectations whilst the responsibilities of the social landlord to support these tenants appears to have been reduced (supporting the arguments of Atkinson, 2006 and Dwyer, 2016) and those accused appear, as a result of not making complaints about their neighbours, to be unable to refute or remove the label of 'ASB perpetrator'.

5.3.4: Homeowners and private rental ASB

Two tenant participants lived on mixed estates, next-door or nearby to private rented and homeowner properties who they felt were perpetrators of ASB. Amelia lived in a social housing property between two shared ownership properties. She had made regular reports of noise nuisance as her neighbours were "playing music so loud my cutlery could have got up and walked out the door" (Amelia, Wave A) and reported she had been verbally abused by them in the street. Additionally, her other neighbour used cannabis in their property which Amelia and her children could smell in their own living room. Despite reporting these issues to the landlord and the police, Amelia stated nothing was done, saying, "I feel like I'm treated differently because I'm a tenant," (Amelia, Wave A).

> *"We actually had a recording device and we recorded and recorded and recorded and the housing wouldn't listen to us and we was told that we had to contact the police because they own all their property now so it wasn't a matter for the housing anymore"* (Amelia, Wave A).

ASB legislation is purportedly not aimed solely at social housing tenants; social landlords are able to use ASB interventions against people who are not their tenants (Burney, 2005, Carr and Cowan, 2006; Deacon, 2004). However, it appears, at least in this case, they may be unwilling to do this, supporting the research of Hunter (2006) who found that even where Local Authorities reported using ASB interventions on a cross-tenure basis, these were exclusively taken against those living within social housing properties. Michael also stated his landlord would not consider an ASB case against someone who was not a tenant, reporting:

"I don't think they would've done nowt about it 'cos the properties where I live, they're split. Some are [Social Landlord], some are [Private Landlord] so the property where this bloke threatened me daughter, where he lives, he lives in a private rented" (Michael, Wave A).

In this instance, the fact that the neighbour was a different tenure prevented a complaint even being made as it was assumed ASB interventions were solely for social tenants. This disparity between tenures had an impact on Amelia, whose feelings of self-worth were diminished because of the lack of support from her landlord and lack of action against her neighbours.

"That's not fair – just because they own it, it doesn't make them any more, morally, you know, it just makes us feel shit, sorry me language" (Amelia, Wave A).

Amelia's feelings of disempowerment worsened over time. By the second interview she lost any hope that her landlord would help her with her complaints.

"I feel like that's even stronger now. I feel like we're sandwiched between two people that are shared ownership, and it just, it just feels sort of like if we've had a valid complaint, it's just, it's just not heard, because we're just the tenant in the middle" (Amelia, Wave B).

This highlights that whilst ASB is apparently tenure-neutral, the behaviour of those living in social housing appears to justify intervention, whereas nuisance behaviour from homeowners or private tenants appears to not fall into the category of ASB, or if it does, does not result in intervention, mirroring the findings of Cheshire et al. (2021) who suggested that whilst neighbour disputes exist amongst all housing tenures, it is social tenants who receive formal intervention from a third party (their social landlord). This inequity between tenures was clear to the social tenants in this study who lived near to homeowners or private rented properties, making them feel inferior and disempowered and demonstrating how income inequality (resulting in low-income households living within social housing; disempowering processes of ASB intervention are further explored in Chapter 6, section 6.1.1) can lead to apparently unfair treatment. This highlights that the current ASB legislation, with focus on social housing as a place of ASB and as a means of tackling it can leave social tenants,

who experience the most control (see Atkinson, 2006; Burney, 2005; Flint, 2018), with little hope of being able to use the ASB system as a lever for action themselves when experiencing ASB from their neighbours.

5.4: Conclusion

This chapter has explored how ASB is defined on the ground, considering the unclear definition of ASB and how the built environment and neighbour relations impact what is defined as antisocial. It is evident that ASB's unclear definition leads to confusion for tenants, inconsistent practice and blame for structural issues placed on individuals. Relationships with neighbours, and how these change over time, is also key to exploring which behaviours are viewed as antisocial, with positive neighbour relations leading to the increased acceptance of neighbours' behaviour and the reduced likelihood of reporting minor ASB. Who is more likely to be seen as antisocial is also a clear issue; social tenants, and especially those who may be more vulnerable, appear to be more likely to be viewed as antisocial as they may also be the least able (or willing) to make counter-reports about their neighbours in order to refute the allegations made about them. That tenants were told to raise new ASB cases against their neighbours rather than their response feeding in to the ASB case against them shows little recognition to the nuance and vulnerability factors that may be significant within the majority of ASB cases. It is also evident that whilst ASB is apparently tenure-neutral (Burney, 2005, Carr and Cowan, 2006; Deacon, 2004), homeowner or private tenant households who cause nuisance to their neighbours do not face the same interventions as social tenants, making ASB interventions appear unjust and unfair to social tenants experiencing ASB from private neighbours. Throughout, this chapter has highlighted how the unclear definition of ASB used in practice can negatively impact alleged perpetrators' experiences of the process; the next chapter considers further broad themes related to how the ASB process is experienced within the context of social housing and what impact this has on alleged perpetrators and their behaviour.

Chapter 6: Experiences and implementation of ASB interventions and behaviour change

This chapter provides an overview of the overarching themes related to experiences of the ASB process, focusing in on issues related to the process, which was generally found to be disempowering, and poor levels of communication. ASB interventions are designed and deployed in ways that are specifically focused on behaviour perceived as irresponsible with the aim to change tenant (or alleged perpetrator's) behaviour and, as the project's research questions are interested in impact, impact on alleged perpetrator behaviour is particularly important to consider (Batty et al., 2018; Flint, 2018). Therefore, this chapter also explores if, and how, tenants' behaviour was impacted by the ASB procedures and interventions they experienced, addressing the research questions related to how ASB interventions are experienced by alleged perpetrators and how alleged perpetrators are impacted by ASB interventions, with consideration given to change over time. The analysis presented here considers the implementation of ASB interventions, considering how vulnerability can help us to understand alleged perpetrator experiences.

6.1: Key themes in experiences of ASB interventions

Key Informants perceived their investigations into reports of ASB as thorough and gave a range of evidence gathering techniques such as sound monitoring, independent witnessing, multi-agency work, collecting incident diaries and regular contact with complainants. All Key Informants reported receiving a complaint, visiting both parties in order to hear both sides and making an action plan with the complainant (and sometimes with the alleged perpetrator). Often, the first punitive intervention used would be a warning letter, which was deemed appropriate for first time and low level ASB. However, tenants routinely recalled the ASB procedure differently and highlighted key issues of the process (as described by the Key Informants) not being followed, contributing to feelings of disempowerment and poor levels of communication.

6.1.1: Disempowering processes

The ASB process was generally reported to be disempowering, with tenants generally feeling a lack of control over the outcome of the ASB case and

experiencing difficult relationships with their housing providers. Tenants struggled to understand the process, an issue which was exacerbated by evidence that social landlords were not always following the procedure they report to adhere to. Generally, there was also a lack of awareness amongst tenants of what evidence landlords collected in relation to ASB cases, with tenants reporting being unable to find out how their landlord made their decisions.

"I was at the opticians but I get the blame for that. I get the blame for breaking a post box and that takes some strength to break, you know what I mean? But I'm gonna ask for CCTV cameras… I want to see all the evidence" (Rangers, Wave A).

Some tenants reportedly asked for drugs tests or sound recording equipment to be installed so they could prove their innocence, however, the landlords refused to do this. Whilst landlords do not have access to drugs tests for tenants, either they, or their Local Authority, are likely to have access to sound recording or noise monitoring equipment.

"If the noise from my house was that bad, why isn't she getting evidence of the noise and the music? Because there are noise monitors to do that" (Rosie, Wave A).

Additionally, two tenants tried to gather evidence in the form of allies, asking neighbours about the complaints and seeing if they thought they were reasonable or, if neighbours said they had no complaints about them, using this as evidence to support their argument that complaints about them were unfounded or unreasonable. Alternatively, one tenant asked the police, usually seen as enforcers of ASB and criminal policy, to verify there was no evidence of nuisance. Police attended Caroline's property for an alleged disturbance. Despite the police deciding there was no need to investigate further, Caroline insisted the police came inside the property to confirm there were no concerns.

"I'm just sat here, drinking a cup of tea having me toast, me daughter's in bed. I said [to the police officer], "Feel free come in, come and look round my home, check my daughter if you want as obviously, safeguarding, go check on her." Erm, he went, "Ah no we don't need -." I said, "No, you've come, obviously you've been

called, there's a cause for concern. I want you to come and check that my child is okay." So, I actually made the police officer go check on my daughter" (Caroline, Wave A).

The believed lack of evidence and perceived unwillingness of the landlord to gather the evidence tenants offered to refute allegations of ASB made against them reinforced their belief that there was little substantive or systematic evidence gathering to support complainant allegations of ASB, supporting the findings of previous research that suggests the lower level of proof needed to evidence reports of ASB can lead to a reduction in levels of investigation and a willingness to accept complainant reports with little evidence gathering (Brown, 2011; Crawford et al., 2017; Hunter et al., 2000). This increased feelings of frustration and helplessness amongst alleged perpetrators who felt they could gather nothing to support their denial of the allegations.

Most tenants felt dissatisfied with the opportunities they were given (or weren't given) to have their say about ASB allegations. For some, they did not feel they were given any opportunity to deny the complaints, with focus solely on enforcement procedures.

"Nobody actually bothers to come and sit and try to sort it out" (Mel, Wave A).

This suggests that despite landlords' procedures stating they interview both parties, this may not always happen. This may be that alleged perpetrators were not given or offered an interview or that the alleged perpetrator did not attend the interview, as was the case with Jenny. Jenny missed the appointment but was not given an opportunity to re-book it. Instead, she was sent a warning letter saying that as she had not kept the appointment, it was assumed all the allegations about her were true. Jenny called her landlord after receiving the warning letter who told her:

"We're assuming it's happened because you didn't turn [up]… I explained to them, look, I can't remember why I wasn't there, but I explained it to them and they were just like, "Well," and that were it" (Jenny, Wave A).

When interviews were conducted, tenants did not feel they were listened to or believed.

"It kind of falls on deaf ears. Because once someone's made the allegation, I don't suppose there's a right lot they can do to investigate, cos it's past tense, so it kind of sticks" (Mel, Wave A).

"It's made me doubt my own self, it's made me question whether I'm believed" Caroline, Wave A).

Two tenants reported their housing officer writing things down and apparently listening, but that nothing came of the visits, making it unclear how much really had been listened to.

"Well, they do write things down when they come to see you, but nothing else happens. I think they throw it in the bin… I mean, I can't prove that, but that's my opinion" (Harry, Wave B).

"Yeah, she wrote it down… It would be nice to know the outcome of it though 'cos we don't know if we've been listened to or our explanation's been accepted" (Kerry, Wave A).

That they did not feel listened to or believed was very distressing to tenants and increased feelings of disempowerment and frustration.

"That's why I wanted to do this [interview], because I know, you know, that you're not, can't do anything about it, but I just feel like I can actually get my side across, you know, to somebody independent, because I feel like I've got this big weight hanging over me now, that I've got this to prove myself" (Pauline, Wave A).

It also eroded trust in their landlord. Tenants felt that, unlike them, complainants were both listened to and believed. Many tenants were victims of crime or ASB themselves (see Chapter 5, sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2) but felt that after being seen as a 'perpetrator' they would no longer be listened to by authorities. This could lead to disengagement with their landlord in any future issues.

"If they'd have listened to what you are saying, things'd be a lot different, but as it is now with most of – most people they just don't bother, they take stuff into their own hands now rather than confirming with their landlords or confirming [with the] police" (Michael, Wave A).

Another respondent, Rangers (Wave A) similarly spoke of "not trusting" her landlord after they failed to act when she complained about another tenant who had injured a visitor and verbally abused nurses visiting Ranger's home (again, highlighting the unclear boundaries between being perceived as a victim or a perpetrator). This reluctance to call the landlord or police could, in turn, lead to further complaints about them and could impact the future sustainability of their tenancy if tenants choose to "take stuff into their own hands" as Michael suggested. Whilst some cases may be resolved by neighbours speaking to each other without the landlord's involvement, if tenants are unwilling to speak to their landlord as issues arise, including serious ASB, this could increase the hardship for the tenant. Ambrose et al. (2015) similarly argued regular contact between landlord and tenant and early intervention into any issues (rent or behavioural) is important to avoid social tenancy evictions. On top of this, hostility towards services as a result of sanction-led interventions can push people away from the welfare system, reducing the efficacy of any future supportive mechanisms and exacerbating vulnerability (Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018).

Alongside the feeling of not being believed or listened to, Caroline and Pauline felt that they were being negatively judged by their housing officer and/or landlord either before or during conducting interviews in their homes.

> *"I felt as though she was being very judgemental. I really, really do. It really, it honestly, it made me feel so rubbish, and I even voiced my concerns. I said I wasn't happy with how she came into my property and she just absolutely just looked down her nose at me"* (Caroline, Wave B).

> *"I felt like it was judge, jury and execution, if you know what I mean, with no come back on my side"* (Pauline, Wave A).

Similar to the findings of Bond-Taylor (2016), these feelings of being judged had a severely negative impact on their feelings of self-worth and on their mental health and wellbeing, again, highlighting a risk of increased vulnerability for alleged perpetrators of ASB. Additionally, this suggests a gendered element to experiences of being judged, with women feeling especially judged on their ability to maintain their home and meet their obligations as tenants.

"It's terrible – it's a living nightmare living there, it really is" (Caroline, Wave A).

"It just starts to undermine your confidence again. It just feeds on your paranoia again. Wondering what people are thinking about you. But I can hold on, you know, the longer I'm there they've got to realise that I'm not what they think I am… [crying] I'm sorry" (Pauline, Wave A).

The damaging impact of interventions on mental health is further discussed in Chapter 7, section 7.5), however, it is clear from this section that feelings of being listened to and believed or judged and not believed left strong impressions on alleged perpetrators (as with issues of not being believed by authorities in Shefer et al., 2016). It is also important to note that it is not just what the intervention was, but how it was delivered, that caused the detrimental impact to self-worth and mental health. The undermined confidence in the social landlord and reduced feelings of self-worth are likely to negatively impact how future interventions are received and perhaps are unlikely to result in positive behaviour change if tenants suffer from exacerbated mental health problems (Shefer et al., 2016) or decide to "take matters into their own hands" as Michael (Wave A) suggested.

As shown above (section 6.1), warning letters were a common intervention used by social landlords early in the ASB process. The majority of tenants involved in the study had received at least one warning letter at some point (see Table 6 in section 6.2 below for a breakdown of interventions used), with a third of tenants reporting a warning letter as the first correspondence from their landlord after a complaint had been made. This warning letter was sometimes followed up by a home visit or phone call interview, however, often tenants had to contact their landlord themselves to discuss the ASB case, suggesting a mechanistic implementation of ASB policy with a warning letter used as a first intervention in the majority of cases. Charlie was shocked when he received a warning letter about noise and racial abuse.

"The parts of it what was put in the letter, what it said I'd violated, were about racial things and about noise. So, I rung them, because I was like, what is this? I've never done anything about racial things in my life… I'm anti-racist, so not likely to say anything racist" (Charlie, Wave B).

When Charlie spoke to his housing officer, they admitted there had not been a complaint about racial abuse and this had been sent out due to an administrative error.

"He said that that had come though by mistake. It'd just been in the printout" (Charlie, Wave B).

Charlie did not, however, receive a second letter retracting the warning letter and he was unsure whether this had been kept on his file. He believed his landlord had not removed it and this would likely resurface in the future if there were further ASB complaints.

Four other tenants also received warning letters as the first step in their ASB case and were unsure whether their landlord had recorded their responses. It appeared that despite their responses, the warning letter was not retracted. This led to feelings of disempowerment and the belief that their neighbour could complain about anything and, whilst it would not be investigated, it would result in further ASB intervention. Mel (Wave B) felt there should be another initial step before a warning letter is sent out.

"If there was summat they could put in place as an initial step before they barge in with the letter, because people now have mental health issues and anxiety and worries and stress, or are maybe going through a bereavement, or there's a hundred and one reasons why they wouldn't deal with that letter in a very well way. Maybe there could be a different way to go around it" (Mel, Wave B).

Whilst according to Key Informants, there should be a number of steps taken before warning letters are sent, it appears tenants routinely felt these were skipped in favour of a quick, punitive response in the form of a formal warning, arguably an almost automatic administrative step that demonstrates a reaction on the part of the landlord (see Table 6 below for a breakdown of interventions used). This apparently easy response, however, can have serious implications for tenants as receipt of warning letters or other ASB interventions can hinder access to social housing in the future and may be used as evidence in future reports of ASB (Deacon 2004; Dwyer, 2016; Hunter et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2006).

Overall, tenants reported the ASB procedure was experienced as unclear, demoralising, unfair and confusing, leading to disempowerment and, for some, disengagement with their social landlord for future issues, suggesting much can be learnt from alleged perpetrators experiences on how to improve the ASB process.

6.1.2: Poor communication

Alongside, and related to, the issues outlined in the section above, poor communication with alleged perpetrators was evident in their reports of their experiences of ASB intervention. Charlie, whose social landlord attempted to take out an injunction against, showed how a lack of communication caused confusion. Charlie reported the injunction was related to noise nuisance that had been reported whilst he was not staying in his flat at all but was in hospital (again suggesting a lack of evidence gathering before punitive action is taken).

> *"They were tryna [trying to] get an injunction on me which would've meant that I wouldn't have even been able to go near me flat really"* (Charlie, Wave A).

It is unlikely the landlord would have attempted to introduce an injunction that would stop the tenant themselves from returning home as this would, in essence, make their tenant homeless. When probed, Charlie was still unsure what the injunction (which he managed to successfully appeal against in court) would have entailed, which suggests some confusion.

> *"Well, I would've had to avoid her [the neighbour], I guess. I'm not really sure how they work"* (Charlie, Wave A).

That Charlie did not understand the injunction or how it would work calls into question the efficacy of such an intervention, although he would potentially have received more detail on the injunction should one have been served on him by the court. Similar to the findings of Blackmore (2007), Brown (2011) and Batty et al. (2018), if tenants do not understand the requirements placed on them and the requirements are not clearly communicated to them, it is unlikely they will be able to abide by them, raising questions about the legitimacy of these interventions (and further interventions used if the injunction is breached).

Tenant knowledge about injunctions was limited. Key Informants however, generally found injunctions to be useful alternatives to evictions, although there were some examples of injunctions being used alongside eviction.

"You've gotta take injunctions out if it's something – that's erm if a person needs to be moved from that area… get yourself down to court, get an injunction out and get that with a power of arrest attached to it and move them on and say look, you can't live here" (Housing Manager, City Organisation).

Examples were given to suggest the versatility of injunctions which could be used as a preventative measure to avoid further legal action such as eviction, but could also be used to place further, legally enforceable conditions on tenants while waiting for the eviction to go through, although how well this would work without clear communication of the conditions was unclear. One key difference between the now defunct ASBOs and their replacement Injunctions is the possibility to introduce 'positive requirements' which can mandate an individual to access and engage with support services (Edwards, 2015).

"It's not just protecting any victims, we can also put some positive requirements in there as well to try and support the perpetrator if they're willing to engage" (Neighbourhood Services Manager, Small Organisation).

Despite liking the idea in theory, none of the landlords had actually used the Positive Requirement aspect.

"I've not explored it partly because my understanding is, there is a strong emphasis on ourselves if it's our injunction to facilitate the positive requirement. So if, for example, you said you have gotta take your dog to the dog classes or something or you have to go to anger management lessons then my understanding is that there is a strong emphasis, or onus, on you to make sure things are available" (ASB Manager, Large Housing Association).

This supports the findings of Varley (2016) who found that the idea of a positive requirement was supported by housing practitioners, however, the pressure placed on landlords to find available support services in a period of budget cuts and the

willingness of support services to engage with landlords or courts when looking at breaches of injunctions hindered their use.

Tenants and Key Informants discussed the importance of early intervention and making sure reports of ASB are responded to in a short timescale.

"It's ingrained in the organisation that you don't let these things just, you know, to bubble and just get worse. You deal with them early on" (Housing Manager, City Organisation).

However, tenants reported how they would hear about a complaint months after the incident.

"Like this last visit, I thought, what's she complaining about now? And they were like, she started complaining on 14 October but bear in mind that this was 5 December when they came out to see me, and she started complaining 14 October so that's… that was [the] kids that was" (Rosie, Wave A).

"The lady – that was August – well yeah that's what annoyed me, it was August when he did the car and we didn't hear anything until… was it October time? That's when they complained about us October time" (Kerry, Wave A).

The length of time between the incident and communication from their landlord made tenants feel annoyed they had not heard about it sooner. Rosie felt she could not challenge the behaviour of her children when it had been months since the issue had occurred. Kerry, who also recounted a number of months between the reported incident and contact with her landlord, was annoyed because she felt the incident was already resolved and had now resurfaced. Michael (Wave A, below), was first interviewed for this research in late November, and had not heard back from his landlord about a date for an ASB interview after a letter in the early summertime:

"They didn't say much they just literally – right we'll sort it out and I've not heard nowt (laughs)….[since] probably June, July" (Michael, Wave A).

These examples suggest that despite landlords' intentions to quickly intervene in cases, responses to reports of ASB may routinely be much slower than intended.

Caroline felt this slow intervention actually meant the landlord was not interested in resolving the complaint.

"It appears to me like they're not dealing with it whatsoever" (Caroline, Wave A).

Whilst participants felt their landlord simply didn't care, this delayed intervention could be related to budget and resource constraints rather than disinterestedness (see Chapter 3, sections 3.3 and 3.5 for discussion on increased financial constraints of social landlords). However, it could also be related to poor practice, with landlords failing to keep tenants up to date with the progress of their case.

The majority of tenants did not know whether the ASB case reported against them was still open. At the time of the first wave of interviews, only Daisy and Jason had been informed that their ASB case was closed.

"I got a letter from [Landlord] saying the allegation was false and if we don't hear anything about it again, hopefully we won't have to come out again" (Jason, Wave A).

In both cases, this letter was received shortly after their ASB interview. Despite Jason stating he knew this would be the outcome, both tenants felt reassured and relieved after receiving the letter. By the time of the second wave of interviews, Michael had also been informed the ASB case was closed, although this was about ten months after the initial letter informing him a complaint had been made. Despite the delay, Michael was also reassured after receiving the letter.

The remaining tenants were unsure whether their case was closed (although two tenants had received further ASB intervention and therefore assumed their cases were open). That tenants were left unsure what was happening with their ASB case is perhaps not surprising as Key Informants stated they did not routinely inform alleged perpetrators when cases were closed. In fact, communication with alleged perpetrators throughout the ASB case appeared to be lacking. Whilst Key Informants stated they kept in regular contact with complainants, it was not similarly the case that they would actively keep alleged perpetrators updated.

"She put the complaint in, and they say antisocial behaviour, you know, so they comes to see us… Then that's it, you don't hear any more. We haven't heard from her since" (Barry, Wave B).

Key Informants expressed reluctance to regularly contact alleged perpetrators as they said tenants would feel harassed by their social landlord. However, tenants unanimously stated they wished they were kept up to date regularly.

"I think that would be useful. Once you're in the system where they're sending you the letters what state that somebody has complained, yes, that would be useful if they kept telling you what was going on. I think you wouldn't be hassled at that point, because you already know about the complaint part of it, do you know what I mean?" (Charlie, Wave B).

Tenants who were still waiting to hear what was happening about their ASB case felt that being regularly updated by their landlord on the progress of the case would relieve some of the worry and strain they had felt since finding out a complaint had been made.

"I think that [being contacted regularly] would have been better, because it puts people's minds at ease, especially for tenants that could potentially be suffering with anxiety and depression. Like someone could still have anxiety, like, Oh my God, are they going to do this in six months' time? Are they going to do this in eight months' time? Have they closed the case? Is it still open? And it would be destroying somebody's mental health" (Rachel, Wave B).

As Rachel (above) stated, the impact of not knowing what was happening with the ASB case did negatively impact a significant proportion of the tenants' mental health, many of whom were already suffered with physical or mental ill-health (see sections 7.1 and 7.4 in the following chapter). Rather than feeling the landlord was checking up on them, tenants wished the landlord would make contact more often and let them know what was happening.

"I don't think I'd feel hounded or anything like that. It'd be handy to know what's going on in the situation you've been put in. Why would you not want to hear anything?" (Amelia, Wave B).

This is similar to research on welfare conditionality in relation to unemployment benefits which found claimants suffered from severe anxiety associated with fear of potential sanction and of attending appointments where sanctions were expected (Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018). In this case, the not knowing can negatively impact tenants' mental health whilst they await an outcome of their ASB case, whether or not they have received a sanction in the form of warning letter or threat of legal action.

Similar to the section above, poor communication increased levels of confusion and disempowerment for alleged perpetrators who were routinely not informed of the process or told when the ASB case was closed, causing negative impacts on their health and ontological security (explored more in the next chapter). However, ASB interventions are intended to have an impact on alleged perpetrators and it is to this intended impact that the chapter now turns to.

6.2: Behaviour change: the intended impact of ASB interventions

Whilst ASB interventions explicitly works to punish, prevent and/or change behaviour (meaning the intended impact on alleged perpetrators is behaviour change), apparently with the intention of further integrating marginalised groups in the society through enforcing changes in behaviour (Mead, 1997; although, this view has been criticised, for example, McNeill, 2020), studies exploring behaviour change have previously suggested that change is often not a linear process and that any change in behaviour is not necessarily the change intended by the intervention (Batty et al., 2018; Flint, 2018). Changes to behaviour were considered a key area of impact for tenants and Key Informants alike and were therefore important to explore in detail. The extent to which tenants reported changing their behaviour, and how they experienced this resultant behaviour change will now be considered. Classifications of behaviour change developed from the data included the behaviour change required by the landlord (i.e., behaviour the intervention was aimed at influencing to resolve, or prevent further, ASB complaints), unintended behaviour change, lack of change, resistance to change and intermittent change.

For Key Informants, a successful case or effective intervention was where complaints subsequently stopped. As one ASB Manager (Large Organisation)

stated, "Problems stop, I mean simply." However, a halt in complaints does not necessarily mean the alleged perpetrator's behaviour has changed. In some cases, the complainant may be dissatisfied with the management of the case and stop reporting issues to the landlord over time. In others, either the alleged perpetrator or complainant could have moved, as happened between first and second waves interviews with Daisy, Michael, Barry and Kerry.

"Gone, gone, the one that caused us all the hassle, that one" (Barry, Wave B).

Whilst all the Key Informants stated the importance of managing a case well, supporting complainants and using resources efficiently when considering a case's success, behaviour change resulting in no further complaints was asserted as, or recognised as, a successful outcome.

"I'd say that's where you've worked with a person or a family and you've reformed them, they're the ideal family, ideal person of the scheme that's a success isn't it?" (Housing Manager, City Organisation).

The normative use of the words "reformed" and "ideal" is telling of the underlying assumptions of the Housing Manager, indicating a tenant's behaviour is in need of reform in order to align with any given housing scheme or to be an 'ideal person,' rather than that neighbour expectations could be modified, neighbour relationships could be improved or the built environment could be improved upon (the analysis and discussion in the previous chapter, as well as in Chapter 2 have highlighted how these issues are important when investigating ASB). This idea of 'reforming' citizens is similar to Mead's (a prominent advocate of welfare condtionality) justification of welfare conditionality, with sanction and/or the threat of sanction required to encourage citizens to act in a way deemed responsible by authorities and the state (Mead, 1997). How to ascertain the extent to which behaviour has changed and whether this is temporary or long-lasting, however, is not simple, and it is also difficult to establish whether any behaviour change is as a result of ASB intervention, support or triggered by other circumstances in an individual's life (Flint, 2018).

Table 6, below, presents a broad summary of the intersection of ASB sanction and support provided, the impact on the tenant relating to behaviour change and whether there was an impact on the health of each tenant. Support service involvement

included housing support workers, domestic abuse services, debt advice charities, alcohol use services and mental health social workers. The data did not suggest a link between intervention used and consistent, required behaviour change, including support service involvement. It is worth noting, however, that the support services involved were not as a result of landlord referral, but self-referral from the tenant and, as found by Ball (2019), are likely to have different priorities from the landlord investigating ASB. Likewise, it is useful to recognise that the balance of sanction and support was heavily weighted towards sanction, with support often not present at all (further discussed in Chapter 7). The most common outcome across tenants was an impact on health, with many tenants reporting negative changes to their physical and mental health which they believed were a result of the ASB interventions. Whilst there were a number of other impacts on tenants (discussed in Chapter 7), negative health outcomes were the most consistent and did have an impact on behaviour, as will be discussed below, although the wider health impacts are considered in more detail in the next chapter.

Table 6: The intersection of sanction and support, behaviour change and health impacts on tenants

Tenant participants	Interventions reported						Support Service involvement (self-referral)	Behaviour change					Negative health outcome reported by tenant
	Home visit	Mediation	Warning letter(s)	Injunction (successfully appealed against)	Notice of Seeking Possession (successfully appealed against)	Notice of Seeking Possession (leading to eviction)		Required behaviour change	Unintended behaviour change	Resistance to change	No behaviour change	Inconsistent change	
Amelia (f)	X	X	X								X		X
Barry (m)	X		X					X	X				X
Caroline (f)	X						X				X		X
Charlie (m)			X	X				X	X				X
Daisy (f)	X								X				
Harry (m)	X		X						X	X			X
Jason (m)	X								X	X			X
Jenny (f)	X		X				X				X		X
Kerry (f)	X		X						X				X
Mel (f)			X							X		X	X
Michael (m)			X						X				
Pauline (f)	X		X					X	X				X
Rachel (f)	X		X				X		X		X		X
Rangers (f)	X		X			X	X		X			X	X
Rosie (f)	X		X		X		X		X				X

150

There was no evidence of consistent behaviour change required by the landlord i.e., the cessation of alleged ASB, without unintended consequences, suggesting that even where behaviour change followed the ASB intervention, this was experienced either inconsistently or alongside other, unintended outcomes. More often, tenants reported unintended behaviour change, with tenants acting in a way that was not in line with the intention of the landlord when implementing ASB interventions, or lack of change, including resistance to change.

6.2.1: 'Reformed' citizens? Required behaviour change

Three tenants reported they had changed their behaviour in response to ASB interventions due to fear of further complaints and the threat of sanction. For example, Charlie (below) described no longer playing his guitar in the flat on an evening.

> *"It definitely changed what I were doing around my house in some ways. Erm, I don't feel as easy, like I play guitar sometimes and I don't feel as relaxed playing it round there now. It's only an acoustic guitar, it's not like an electric belting everything out but now I don't even feel comfortable to do that on a night now round there"* (Charlie, Wave A).

By the time of the second interview, Charlie felt so worried about making a noise in his flat, he asked any visitors to speak in a voice that was almost a whisper so that his neighbour would have no chance of hearing them.

> *"The silence has been unbearable at times. I've had to like, when I've had people round, we've had to say at like ten o'clock, you're not allowed to talk above sort of a whisper"* (Charlie, Wave B).

Despite this reported change in behaviour, Charlie still received a further warning letter and the case against him was not closed, presumably as further complaints were made by the complainant. Whilst Charlie changing his behaviour, to ensure he is quieter in his home, was presumably the required outcome of the ASB interventions, it seems that this negatively impacted on Charlie and failed to prevent further ASB allegations. That Charlie found the quiet in his home "unbearable" and did not feel able to have visitors at the property talking at normal volume could be a

sign that the behavioural requirements placed unreasonable strain on Charlie's daily life, preventing his enjoyment of his home, something that Key Informants appeared to view as a right to be awarded to all tenants.

> *"There is a sort of belief … [held] by some people isn't there? That people should be like erm unbelievably quiet. Silence is like a virtue and something to, something to want, but I don't think like that, silence is terrible"* (Charlie, Wave B).

García Ruiz and South (2019) identified a tension between the right to domestic privacy and rest alongside the rights of others to use their own living environments as they wish, accessing their own "acoustic rights" which they defined as the right to make a noise in your own space (García Ruiz and South, 2019, pg. 133, further discussion of noise in Chapter 2, section 2.2.1 and Chapter 5, section 5.2.1). Whilst Charlie stated he did change his behaviour due to fear of further and escalating sanction, he still felt the expectations placed on him, which he perceived as to be completely silent in his home, were unreasonable and that the complainant's expectations should have been managed rather than his own behaviour.

Barry also changed his behaviour after an ASB home visit about parking his work vehicle on the public road in front of his neighbour's property. By the time of the second interview, Barry no longer parked in this space. Whilst this may appear to be the required behaviour change, he had retired from work, reducing his and Kerry's household income significantly, in order to prevent further complaints, an example of unintended behavioural outcomes triggered by the ASB intervention.

> *"I told them, I said nah. I just, I just don't want the hassle"* (Barry, Wave B).

This again shows that whilst the required behaviour change appeared to occur as Barry was concerned about the threat of future sanction, this could have a much wider impact on Barry and Kerry's ability to manage their daily living expenses and manage other conditions of their tenancy, such as paying rent. How Barry felt about the intervention changed over time. Initially he felt the ASB complaint about him was illegitimate as there was nowhere else to park his vehicle. Therefore, he did not intend to change his behaviour. However, by the second interview, whilst he still believed the report of ASB was unreasonable, he had made changes in his life to prevent further complaints. Significantly, the ASB case about Barry was related to a

lack of parking on the estate rather than individual behaviour on Barry's part. That this led to Barry retiring from work (where paid work is normally viewed as highly responsible behaviour, Mead 1997; Murray, 2013) illustrates the problem of subsuming structural issues (in this case, the lack of suitable parking facilities) under ASB policies and procedures.

Pauline also changed how she used her home in order to prevent further ASB interventions. Pauline received daily care and support from her brother who regularly visited her for short periods of time to provide this care. These visits were misconstrued by her neighbour as related to drug use, and Pauline received allegations of drug dealing as a result.

> *"Because I suffer with social anxiety, and my parents were in their seventies, so my brother, at the time, for the first few months till I got the complaint, used to drive around to make sure I was up, so he would either drive in and I would have to go down to see him to make sure I come outside the house, because I was quite bad at the time. Or he would come upstairs every now and again, just to keep check that I was, you know, that everywhere was tidy, that there was food in the cupboard, but because he was coming daily, and quick in-and-out visit, or I was just going quickly downstairs, one of the neighbours thought there was something going on"* (Pauline, Wave A).

However, despite this explanation to her housing officer, she still received a warning letter for ASB. It appeared that Pauline's explanation was either not believed or was not perceived as reasonable, suggesting that informal care was viewed as antisocial behaviour rather than vulnerability and support need. Again, this highlights how the imprecise, catch-all definition of ASB can lead to otherwise 'responsible' behaviour (caring for a relative) being viewed as antisocial and in need of resolution. It also suggests that vulnerability may be overlooked on the ground in favour of punitive responses to apparently nuisance behaviour. As a result of the ASB intervention, her brother did not to come to her property anymore.

> *"As it is, my brother has actually fallen out with me and won't come 'round anymore because he feels like he's been branded as either a drug dealer or a drug user"* (Pauline, Wave A).

Not only did this mean she did not get the daily support she needed, impacting her mental health, and exacerbating her vulnerability, it also contributed to a relationship breakdown between her and her brother, with their relationship deteriorating to the extent that he still did not speak with Pauline by the second interview. Pauline was not offered any support from her landlord, despite Pauline informing her landlord of her social anxiety that impacted her ability to meet her daily needs. Sanction was the only response given to apparently nuisance behaviour. Charlie, Barry and Pauline's examples suggest that landlords' focus solely on the perceived impact on behaviour as an indicator of an effective ASB intervention is too simplistic. These examples also reinforce the issues with the broad and imprecise, catch-all definition of ASB, with behaviour such as parking a work vehicle in front of a neighbour's property due to parking restrictions and receiving informal care viewed as antisocial. By looking at the perceived failure to meet behavioural conditions in isolation, ignoring structural, situational or individual vulnerability (such as a health condition requiring regular care), ASB interventions may lead to some behaviour change, but are unlikely to resolve wider issues and may exacerbate problems for the alleged perpetrators.

6.2.2: Unintended behaviour change

As well as the unintended impacts on tenants as a consequence of meeting the required behavioural changes discussed above, there was also evidence of unintended behaviour change due to ASB interventions. For Daisy, this was a temporary change which only lasted a few weeks. Daisy stopped her children playing outside, despite this being unrelated to the complaint she had received about an argument with her neighbour. After a while with no further complaints, she felt comfortable letting her children play outside again. For others, however, the unintended behaviour change was more damaging and longer lasting. For example, Rangers, Pauline and Amelia all felt unsafe and unable to go outside (see Chapter 7, section 7.3 for further discussion on this).

Rosie also struggled with long-lasting unintended effects of sanction. At Rosie's first interview, she said she had accessed support for alcohol use as she was fearful that she would begin using alcohol again.

"I used to have a drink problem a few years ago and I've gone back to me counsellor because of what this woman's done. I nearly went back to the drink cos of her, because it's stressing me out, I'm really stressing" (Rosie, Wave A).

By the time of the second interview, Rosie's landlord had installed CCTV on her neighbour's house, facing Rosie's front door. When Rosie questioned whether this was allowed, her housing officer told her it was, that the CCTV would not be removed and that it would support Rosie if the cameras proved there was no nuisance taking place. Rosie felt spied upon and became uncomfortable leaving her house as she would be seen by the cameras. However, she was scared to question her housing officer, highlighting how the power imbalance between tenant and housing provider and the practices housing providers use can increase feelings of disempowerment and vulnerability.

"I don't want to be like, this is how silly this sounds, like I don't want to be causing too much trouble about this camera, because they, [Housing Association], could then make it hard for me living here. You don't know, do you?" (Rosie, Wave B).

Rosie's example epitomises the deepening and widening of social control mechanisms such as welfare conditionality through the use of technologies, with overt social control in the form of CCTV which both monitored and constrained her everyday life (Gregory, 2018; Innes, 2003; Minton, 2009). This had a significant impact on her mental health and contributed in her returning to alcohol use and reaching "rock bottom" (Rosie, Wave B).

"I had the feeling that she were getting at me, and [Housing Association] are not standing by me and my own problems what I have with my own mental health. Just all rolled in one ball, it were like bumph [makes explosion sound]. Hit me like a rock" (Rosie, Wave B).

Rosie's drinking escalated and she couldn't always remember what had happened. She recalled an occasion where she woke up in a police cell with numerous bruises and no memory of getting there.

"Because last thing I remember is I sat there [at home] and I went to sleep. And then I woke up in the cells" (Rosie, Wave B).

She was told when she left the cells that the previous night, she had assaulted a police officer and, at the time of the second interview, was awaiting a court date. Rosie had told her landlord that her neighbour was "driving me crazy" (Rosie, Wave B) and that she was worried about returning to using alcohol as a coping mechanism but she was not, initially, offered any support from her landlord related to this suggesting, again, that vulnerability is overlooked on the ground in favour of sanction. By the time her housing officer asked if Rosie wanted a referral for some support, Rosie had already self-referred to an alcohol use support service. Rosie identified that the installation of the CCTV cameras and her experience of the ASB procedure, combined with her own mental health, led to a feeling of being overwhelmed and a return to alcohol use. This highlights how ASB interventions are often experienced negatively by alleged perpetrators and can have significant unintended negative effects. Whilst Rosie had attempted to self-refer to support for alcohol use, this support was delayed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and she was struggling to engage with counselling over the phone as this felt less personal than face to face counselling sessions. Her landlord, at the time of the second interview, had not given any further offer of support.

6.2.3: Lack of behaviour change and resistance

Seven tenant participants reported either no behaviour change and/or resistance to change as a result of ASB interventions. Five of these tenants stated they did not need to change their behaviour as the complaints against them were untrue. Rachel, on the other hand, accepted that the allegation against her was true (she had left two sofas in the external communal area of her housing estate) and reported no behaviour change. However, whilst she said the warning letter "didn't have a major impact" (Rachel, Wave B) on her due to other priorities in her life at the time, she did report thoroughly cleaning her home following a housing officer visit as she was told the property did not meet her landlord's standard.

> "I've had to, you know, like go from top to bottom of my house and I've just, I've blitzed everywhere" (Rachel, Wave A).

Nevertheless, Rachel did not arrange removal of the sofas she had left in the communal area outside the front of her property and which had resulted in a warning letter. At the first interview, Rachel said she intended to remove the sofas but did not

have the funds. She was in rent arrears and had an issue with her benefits claim that meant she was not receiving any income.

> *"I've explained my situation, you know, with having no money and an unborn baby on the way, a 2-year-old to provide for, it's coming up to Christmas… Erm and they'd [Local Council Collection Service] just basically said to me that when I'm financially stable and getting myself out of arrears, just give them a ring when I've got the money and they will happily come and collect the sofas"* (Rachel, Wave A).

This quote suggests that rather than having no impact on her, Rachel did intend to have the furniture removed, potentially as a result of the ASB warning letter, but did not have the funds to do so. At the time of the second interview, the furniture had been removed, although she had not arranged it.

> *"It was just like one night they were there. I got up the next morning and they were gone"* (Rachel, Wave B).

The multiple, overlapping vulnerabilities faced by Rachel appear to have impacted her ability to comply with the conditions placed on her; as she was in poverty and debt, she was not able to pay for the sofa to be removed. Similar to previous examples from Key Informants, where tenants were asked to buy rugs to put down to lessen noise (Chapter 5, section 5.1.2), the behavioural conditions here are not cost neutral and rely on access to funds. Despite informing her landlord that she couldn't afford the removal costs (and despite being in arrears with the landlord at the time), she was not offered any support managing her finances, appealing against benefit sanctions (or decisions) or accessing charitable services such as food banks. The ASB intervention reduced in importance for Rachel over time. As time went on after the warning letter, with no further intervention taken, she gradually became less anxious about further action. This meant that, despite stating in her first interview that the ASB interventions had made her very anxious, by the time of the second interview, she could reflect that on the whole, in comparison to other issues in her life at the time (including debt, domestic abuse and caring for, and later reapplying for custody of, her children), it had, comparatively, not had a "major impact". Whilst the social housing provider, in this instance, perhaps arguably had the opportunity to

ameliorate Rachel's vulnerability to a certain extent by providing support to her (Fineman, 2013), it looks like this opportunity was passed over.

Two tenants stated they had made some of the required behaviour changes but reported resisting against other changes or interventions. Harry received a complaint that he had CCTV without permission. He removed one camera from his property at the request of his housing officer, but kept two up, saying:

> "I've still got two up, on my own property like. She tried to get them down, but she can't do it. That all backfired on her. She weren't happy about that" (Harry, Wave A).

Mel also reported resistance. Mel refused to sign a Pet Owner's Contract which stated if the behaviour of her dog was not acceptable, she would be asked to remove it. The landlord appeared to accept this resistance.

> "I said over my dead body am I signing that, he's already a rescue dog. So, she were like, I knew you were going to say that" (Mel, Wave A).

These tenants appeared to feel more able to resist interventions, either because they felt more informed than their housing officer of their rights to CCTV (Harry, whether this was true or not), or because they recognised their right not to engage in a voluntary ASB intervention (Mel). This highlights that some tenants may be more able to resist interventions than others and that they may do so for different reasons. Whilst Rachel appeared to resist behaviour change, this was essentially due to a lack of funds. Mel and Harry on the other hand, questioned the legitimacy of the interventions and felt able to resist or not engage.

Jason also resisted interventions from his landlord. Jason has multiple, complex health problems and requires carers to attend his property numerous times a day. He received an allegation of drug dealing when (similar to Pauline discussed above), a neighbour had observed visitors (who were his carers) attending his property regularly for short periods of time. Jason could not recall what was said at his ASB interview as:

"I didn't take much notice because I was shouting and bawling. I weren't happy about the allegation" (Jason, Wave A).

Jason's experiences of ASB intervention understandably made him feel angry that receiving the daily care that he required led to an ASB complaint and interview, given that it is both inappropriate and unfair to ask him to change his behaviour given his impairments. As his care needs had not changed, he couldn't change this behaviour.

"I just carry on as it always has been. Meals, carers, meals, carers, beds, carers. Just all done the same. I can't change me lifestyle. I'm in a wheelchair, I need help" (Jason, Wave A).

Unfortunately, Jason was not available for a second interview, so it is not known whether further complaints were received or interventions were used. Nevertheless, Jason's example, again, highlights the issues that arise because of the vague catch-all definition of ASB set out in policy (see Chapter 2, section 2.2). Like Pauline (discussed in section 6.2.1 above) Jason's care needs, which were met by carers attending his property for short periods of time throughout the day, were perceived as antisocial and again, like Pauline, his vulnerability and care needs were side-lined in favour of punitive responses to perceived ASB rather than by offers of (or provision of) support or an acceptance that some tenants may need regular visitors to meet their needs. The failure to recognise this behaviour as a result of disability also highlights how a policy focused solely on perceived nuisance and failure to meet expected behavioural norms may be ableist and exclusionary in practice, with necessary behaviours for disabled tenants viewed as antisocial and vulnerability and care needs missed in favour of punitive responses. These findings support the argument that disabled people are disproportionately impacted by the intensification of welfare conditionality and those with vulnerabilities may be less able to meet the obligations placed on them by welfare providers (Dwyer et al., 2020; Harrison and Hemingway, 2014; Pybus et al., 2019; Shefer et al, 2016). This suggests that the expectations of changed behaviour in this example (and in Pauline's example of informal care above) routinely do not take into account the needs of disabled people (for more discussion on the impact of ASB interventions on tenants with disabilities or health conditions, see Chapter 7).

As well as resistance, Mel and two other tenants (Barry and Charlie), felt resigned that future complaints were likely to be received, regardless of whether they complied with the intervention or changed their behaviour. That these three tenants believed that ASB interventions were not linked to their behaviour at all undermines the legitimacy of the process. ASB is supposed to be about curtailing irresponsible, individual behaviour although, as this analysis illustrates, it is often used in response to a wide range of issues that do not relate to individual behaviour at all (such as the provision of care or issues with the built environment) or, when it does relate to behaviour, may relate to the behaviour of others rather than the tenant (for example, partners or dependents, see Chapter 7, section 7.4). It is perhaps not surprising then, that some tenants resist interventions, or feel resigned to further complaints, when the complaints they are receiving may be related to issues that feel out of their control or are plainly not ASB in any meaningful sense.

6.2.4: Intermittent or fluctuating behaviour change

For two tenants (Mel and Rangers), any change of behaviour in line with the intention of the ASB interventions was temporary. Mel (below) described how she did try to prevent further complaints from her neighbour by not engaging in any arguments with him because:

> "I can't be bothered with him anymore. He drives me mentally insane. So, any conflict whatsoever, I just can't be bothered. I've got enough on my plate without him" (Mel, Wave B).

However, she then acknowledged that whilst she felt anxious of further complaints at times, at others, she felt less concerned.

> "Say if I was sat by myself, I can feel quite nervous about being in the house, so it can work both ways, where I'd draw my curtains, I wouldn't have my curtains open, you know, just so I couldn't see him, or you know, so I wouldn't have to see him. At other times, if I had my family round and stuff, I'd be like no, bugger him, I never make any noise, if I want people 'round, my family 'round, I will" (Mel, Wave B).

Whilst, at times, Mel wished to prevent further complaints, she also reflected that she generally received "one complaint a year, maybe two" (Mel, Wave B) and may as well enjoy her home and have her family visit. It also hints that Mel felt that as she did not feel she had been noisy in her home for a long period of time, she could at times be less cautious about future complaints and enjoy having family visit. This suggests that she gave less importance to previous ASB interventions over time. She felt it was clear to her housing officer that the complaints against her were because of a personal dislike from her neighbour rather than due to her behaviour:

"Like I say, I've never had complaints from anyone else, they all love me… I think it's just become quite apparent, hopefully, that it is just him that's got a bee in his bonnet about me personally" (Mel, Wave B).

This echoes the arguments made in the previous chapter, section 5.2.2 and Chapter 2, section 2.2.2 about the importance of neighbour relations in the perception of ASB, with 'bad' neighbour relations leading to an increased sensitivity to nuisance and an increased likelihood of complaint (Cheshire et al., 2021; Stokoe and Wallwork, 2003)

Rangers stated that she had stopped the majority of visitors coming to her home to prevent further ASB interventions and with the support she was receiving, organised by the Local Authority after she had been served a Notice of Seeking Possession from her landlord.

"I've stopped all my children coming up. I've stopped everybody coming up except [gestures round room] and maybe [friend's name] and that's it" (Rangers, Wave A).

However, by the time of the second interview, she was no longer receiving as much support and these visitors were, again, visiting her home, despite legal injunctions to keep certain visitors away.

"What it is sweetheart, I can't help it, I've got a big family. I've got eleven grandchildren. Obviously they want to see their grandma, you know what I mean? So, I can't help that. I'm very sorry about it, but I can't help it" (Rangers, Wave B).

This supports the findings of Batty et al. (2018) who found changes in behaviour generally do not follow a linear path and can be characterised by periods of progress followed by regression. It also suggests that the Notice of Seeking Possession Rangers had received, which represents the start of eviction proceedings against a tenant, was not enough to change behaviour on its own; she needed support to remove these visitors from her home. When the support dropped off, she was no longer able to keep the visitors away (Rangers' story is further discussed in Chapter 7: section 7.5). ASB interventions, though, generally do not allow for this fluctuation, with the processes referred to by Key Informants introducing escalating sanctions after breaches (Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018). Overall, whilst tenants did report changes to behaviour, this was generally not in the way intended; sustained, required behaviour change was not evident from the perspectives of alleged perpetrators, suggesting that there is a gap between the policy narrative and how interventions are received on the ground. The impact on behaviour was generally experienced negatively by tenants and could, on occasion, increase the vulnerability of the tenant (the impact of interventions on vulnerability will be further explored in Chapter 7).

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn out the overarching themes of experiences of ASB intervention, including disempowering processes and poor communication, overall contributing to significantly negative experiences of ASB intervention. These arguably flawed processes (in part related to evidence that social landlords are not always following their own ASB procedures) can be seen to exacerbate levels of vulnerability by negatively impacting mental health and potentially pushing alleged perpetrators away from supportive services (these issues are explored in more detail in the next, final analysis chapter). Additionally, this chapter has considered behaviour change over time as a vital aspect of impact when exploring experiences of ASB intervention. Similar to the findings of Batty et al. (2018), it is clear that behaviour change is not necessarily linear, but also that any change in behaviour is not necessarily the change intended by the intervention. Whilst some tenants did report changing their behaviour to avoid further and potentially escalating ASB interventions in the future, this had wider, negative repercussions for them including

reductions in income, relationship breakdown with family members, reduced care provision and negative impacts on mental health, contributing to the overwhelmingly negative experiences of ASB intervention. One tenant who reported changing his behaviour as required found that complaints against him did not stop and further warning letters were sent. Other, unintended effects of ASB interventions were reported by a number of tenants, with one participant using alcohol as a mechanism to manage the feeling of being overwhelmed by ASB interventions and her mental health condition and others feeling unable to let their children play outside (albeit temporarily) or feeling unsafe to leave their home. Alongside these cases, there was evidence of intermittent behaviour change, a lack of behaviour change and resistance to change, with some tenants unable to, or demonstrating resistance to, changing their behaviour. A number of tenants felt resigned to further complaints regardless of any changes they may make to their behaviour and again demonstrating feelings of disempowerment.

All of this suggests the pathway from intervention to required behaviour change is not direct and that ASB interventions and their associated behaviour change agenda can have severely negative impacts on the tenant over time; an outcome which has not been detailed in previous research in this way. Analysis presented here also clearly illustrates the problems that ensue from the imprecise, catch-all definition of ASB in policy (see Chapter 2, section 2.2 and Chapter 5, section 5.1), with even care provision and/or receipt being perceived as ASB resulting, in one case highlighted above, with a tenant's daily care needs no longer being met. The analysis presented in this chapter provides new evidence of ASB interventions from the point of view of alleged perpetrators who provided convincing and personal accounts of changed behaviour, often in a way that was both negative and unintended by the interventions. These negative impacts have a direct bearing on how ASB interventions impact tenant vulnerability, now further explored in the next chapter.

Chapter 7: ASB interventions and vulnerability

Within social housing, there is a tradition of both care and control, particularly for tenants perceived as vulnerable or as having complex needs (see Chapter 3). This chapter presents analysis related to the vulnerability of alleged perpetrators of ASB and the support that is offered to them (or not) as a result of ASB intervention, exploring the impact of ASB interventions on tenants and their vulnerability over time and what a focus on lived experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB can add to understandings of vulnerability in ASB policy and practice. It discusses how vulnerability may be ameliorated or exacerbated over time by the interventions and other circumstances in the tenant's life, applying the more nuanced and dynamic understanding of vulnerability developed in Chapter 3 which considers lived experiences of individual, structural and situational vulnerability and which pays particular attention to social divisions. First, the chapter explores the vulnerabilities presented by tenant participants and the support offered to alleged perpetrators of ASB from their social landlords. This is followed by a discussion on how supportive tenants perceive their landlords to be and the impact of the relationship between housing officer and tenant. Ontological security as an important element of vulnerability is then considered within the context of housing and ASB interventions, exploring how ASB practices by an institution can increase vulnerability by reducing feelings of ontological security. Further detail is then given to two key social divisions which featured prominently in the study and have been shown through Chapters 2 and 3 to be particularly important in relation to ASB practice, exploring the impact of ASB interventions on women, including those who are victims of domestic abuse and how disability or health may be side-lined, ignored or impacted by ASB interventions.

7.1: Vulnerability amongst alleged perpetrators

As identified throughout Chapters 2 and 3 (see especially sections 2.3, 3.5, 3.5.1 and 3.5.2), alleged perpetrators of ASB often present a number of vulnerabilities and unmet support needs such as mental ill-health, disability, addictions and poverty (Brown, 2013; Hunter et al., 2000; Jones et al., 2006) The table below (Table 7) shows vulnerabilities as reported by tenant participants and how these vulnerabilities changed between research waves with 'A' and "B" referring to each interview wave.

Table 7: Vulnerabilities over time as reported by tenants in wave A and B of interviews

Tenant participants	Over 65 years old?	Physical health condition	Mental health condition	Suicidal thoughts/ attempts	Victim/ survivor of domestic abuse	Benefit issues/sanctions or other financial hardship	Debt	Problematic alcohol use	Family illness, bereavement or adult care respnsibilities	Single parent (mother)
Amelia (f)		A and B	A and B						B	
Barry (m)	Yes	A and B							B	
Caroline (f)			A and B		A and B	A	A			A and B
Charlie (m)		A and B							A and B	
Daisy (f)										A and B
Harry (m)	Yes	A and B	B							
Jason (m)		A	A							
Jenny (f)					A and B	B				
Kerry (f)									B	
Mel (f)		A and B	A and B			A				A and B
Michael (m)		A and B								
Pauline (f)			A and B							
Rachel (f)				A	A and B	A and B	A and B			B
Rangers (f)	Yes	A and B	A and B	A and B	A and B				B	
Rosie (f)			A and B	A		A		B		A and B

All 15 tenants reported at least one form of vulnerability, with 12 tenants reporting multiple vulnerabilities. This suggests that the majority of tenants who took part in the study had what some providers and academics call complex needs or multiple, overlapping vulnerabilities, which social housing providers state they wish to provide with extra care and support (Brown, 2015; Dobson, 2019; Power and Bergen, 2018). As these tenants were also alleged to be engaging in ASB, this support could be expected to be accompanied by the threat or use of sanctions where noncompliance was an issue (Dobson, 2019). However, the majority of tenants reported receiving sanctions (see Table 6 in section 6.2 of the previous chapter) whilst not receiving any support from their landlord. The table above provides a snapshot of reported vulnerability by participants and shows that whilst the level of vulnerability the tenants reported fluctuated over time, all tenants could still reasonably be classed as vulnerable at both interviews. All tenant participants were also social housing tenants with relatively limited social capital and economic resources as well as a power imbalance between them and their social landlord, adding an additional layer of vulnerability (Jones et al., 2006; McNeill, 2014). It is not practical here to show the extent vulnerability impacted tenants' day to day lives and it is possible that not all tenant participants reported all the vulnerabilities they were experiencing, or indeed, perceive themselves as vulnerable at all (Fawcett, 2009; Harrison and Hemingway, 2014). Similarly, some tenants may still be managing certain vulnerabilities but not mention it in one of the interviews, for example, financial hardship or debt. As this research was not explicitly exploring this aspect of the tenant's life, the tenant may have chosen not to mention it, even if they were still managing it. However, the table does provide a snapshot of the vulnerabilities reported by tenant participants at the time of the two interviews which is a useful dimension to explore experiences of, and impacts of, ASB interventions on social tenants.

7.2: Supporting the vulnerable?

This section focuses on the support stakeholder organisations stated they provided to their tenants, specifically those who had been alleged to be engaged in ASB. All Key Informants were asked how they take into account issues of vulnerability and to discuss what support they generally offered to alleged perpetrators of ASB. One Key Informant's response to the first question is presented below.

Kirsty: How do you take account issues such like gender or race or disability when you are making decisions about how you might intervene?

ASB Manager: Nah, that's a load of bollocks [laughs]. That was a joke. Hang on, how we might intervene?

Kirsty: Yes, so how do you take into account these issues when you are making decisions about how you might intervene?

ASB Manager: [Long pause] I'm stumped with that… (ASB Manager, Large Housing Association.

Whilst the question, when framed through a lens of diversity, may have caused some difficulty for Key Informants, the question of generalised support was met with more coherent responses. Key Informants suggested the majority of their support for perpetrators came through multi-agency working with the police, social services and mental health services. By signposting to other services Key Informants felt they met their obligations of providing support without being involved in direct care provision. That being said, Key Informants' priorities were generally still to change behaviour through enforcement processes rather than support provision, with little credence apparently given to the idea that support may also change behaviour or lead to a reduction in reports of ASB in the long term.

"Part of the investigation process… is that we have to ask you questions and ask you about your health, if there are any issues or any support needs that you need. So, there is a lot of that going on in terms of trying to meet our obligations to stay within the law, you know. But if you challenge me and saying are you genuinely promoting perpetrator support, I couldn't probably hand on heart say that we - how effective our measures are. I still think our priority is to stop the problems" (ASB Manager, Large Housing Association).

"We want people to feel, tenants to feel supported but we do want people to behave in our properties and to have – have that balance of communities and stuff so we are trying" (ASB Manager, Local Authority**).**

The implied view of the ASB Managers above is that to stop complaints or to ensure tenants comply with expectations, enforcement and sanction is prioritised over support. Only one tenant (Mel) reported receiving some form of support from her housing officer, who delivered Food Bank vouchers to her when she was unwell and unable to work. Another tenant reported being asked if she would like some support months after the initial complaint and after she had told her housing officer she had already referred herself to an alcohol use service. The remaining tenant participants stated they had not been offered support from their landlord, either in the form of direct provision or signposting to other services. Power and Bergen (2018) highlighted that individual housing officers operate with a level of discretion, allowing them to tailor the service they provide to the needs of the individual tenant. However, discretion in support services can be problematic meaning who gets the care, or who is seen as deserving of care and support, may vary (Alden, 2015). In this case, it appears those alleged to be engaging in ASB are not receiving care they feel they need as focus is placed on sanction over support. This could be taken as an example of welfare conditionality in action through the form of ASB intervention, where sanction is prioritised and support is side-lined or, in the majority of the cases explored in this research, non-existent. This supports the findings of Brown (2015) who stated that when vulnerability is combined with transgressive behaviour there could be a withdrawal of the status of vulnerability, with individuals reassessed as having agency and making a personal choice to behave in a deviant way. This could lead to a withdrawal of services or an increase in disciplinary measures (see Chapter 3, section 3.1).

Judging from conversations with Key Informants, having a good relationship between housing officer and tenant, especially when introducing interventions to manage behaviour, appears fairly well known amongst practitioners as a strategy for managing ASB and supporting tenants. The importance of this tenant and housing officer relationship is less well-documented in academic literature, although ASB interventions such as the Troubled Families Programme heavily emphasised the relationship between the individual workers and the households they worked with (Hoggett and Frost, 2018; Parr, 2016). Literature on social worker and service user relationships is more robustly documented (Beresford, Croft and Adshead, 2008; Buckley, Carr and Whelan, 2011; Rollins, 2019). Whilst housing officers and social

worker roles differ, the need to use a combination of care and support alongside control is similar, with social work considered the closest profession to the work of a housing officer (Hanson and Natland, 2017; Ward et al., 2010). The next two sections will explore how supportive this relationship was perceived to be by tenant participants.

7.2.1: Tenant perceptions of support from social landlords

For the most part, tenants held negative views of their different social landlords. Some simply stated their landlord was "useless" (Harry, Wave A) or "absolutely disgraceful" (Caroline, Wave B). Whilst perhaps it may be expected that after tenants have received a complaint about them they could feel some animosity towards the landlord who is acting upon the complaint, it appeared to be deeper than a superficial dislike. When asked to elaborate, tenants reported a perceived lack of care and support ("They don't give you nowt. You more or less fend for yourself, to be quite honest" Barry, Wave B) and poor communication ("They just seem to push me from pillar to post" Jenny, Wave B) as the main reasons for their negative perception of their landlord. Longstanding repair issues also contributed to negative opinions of the tenant's landlords and the feeling of not being supported, with three tenants reporting they had serious repair issues, including unusable wash facilities for a tenant with physical disabilities which prevented her from washing at the sink, damp and a leaking roof which, despite being reported multiple times, had not been fixed. Rangers also reported:

> "My bathroom's getting all damp patches. The bedroom wall's crumbling. They don't do nothing for you, they don't do nothing to help. They just take your rent money and that's it" (Rangers, Wave A).

One of the key responsibilities of a social landlord is to provide good quality homes that are fit for purpose (Costarelli et al., 2020; Cowan, 2011). However, whilst tenants were expected to meet the behavioural requirements outlined in their tenancy agreements or face sanction, they did not have the same opportunity to sanction their landlord for failing to meet their obligations to support tenants and provide repairs to their homes. Some tenants further suggested that their social landlords have no intention of supporting tenants as they are only focused on collecting rent.

"It's a money-making scheme, it is, being a landlord for such a big company, it's a money-making scheme. There's no compassion. There's no care. No nothing" (Amelia, Wave B).

"They don't come out. They just – it's like in my and my partner's eyes, it's just they're more interested in just one thing and that's the rent" (Michael, Wave B).

For Harry, this feeling of not being supported by his landlord appeared to have worsened over time due to a change in his landlord's policies. Harry described how he was no longer able to contact his local housing office and instead, had to call a switchboard and hope for a call back which may or may not come. He no longer knew who his housing officer was and the previous phone numbers he used to contact his local team no longer worked.

"The landlords that were sort of looking after us, I'll say, have gone elsewhere, so I don't know who's looking after us now. Maybe nobody [laughs]. That's my opinion" (Harry, Wave B).

The lack of ability to contact staff he had previously built up a relationship with and the increased length of time he had to wait to hear anything back made Harry feel his social landlord did not care about him. Due to significant reductions in funding for social housing providers, and increased financial pressures placed on social housing tenants directly due to austerity policies such as the Welfare Reform Acts of 2012 and 2016 (see Chapter 3, sections 3.3 and 3.5), it is possible that housing providers are spending an increased amount of time and resources on bringing in an income through rental payments and that this is being felt by tenants. Costarelli et al. (2020) have also argued the increasingly business-like focus of social housing providers internationally since the 1980s, alongside residualisation, has led to social welfare goals being side-lined in favour of other priorities related to finance.

Jenny had a similar experience to Harry (discussed above) of struggling to contact her local office, although she believed this was due to the impact of Covid-19 resulting in staff working from home.

"I've had to ring them about eight times before I even had a call back because they're all working at home aren't they? So, like, they've got to take a message

and email it all and then you've got to wait for that person to call you. Got to ring them nearly every day" (Jenny Wave B).

However, this poor communication reported by Jenny in her second interview was not new, as in her first interview, prior to staff working from home as a result of Covid-19, she, and the majority of other tenants in this research, reported poor communication (see Chapter 6, section 6.1.2). Again, this lack of communication may be related to increased financial constraints and a lack of resources to provide a more personalised service to customers through local housing teams. However, whilst a lack of resources and the need to ensure an income through rental payments may be understandable, a large element of social housing provision is argued to be the provision of care (Power and Bergen, 2018). On the other hand, Atkinson (2006) argued that local housing officers may choose to limit their contact with (and therefore their support for) tenants who are perceived to be challenging or antisocial. Whilst Power and Bergen (2018) report social housing providers resist austerity policies and find ways to provide care and support to their tenants, the findings of this research suggest that supporting tenants does not appear to be a priority, at least in relation to alleged perpetrators of ASB, regardless as to whether or not the tenant is acknowledged as vulnerable by the housing provider.

7.2.2: Support from individual housing officers

Tenants described how a positive or negative relationship with individual housing officers impacted the level of support they felt they received. Key Informants also stressed the importance of building a relationship up between tenants and their housing officer as an important part of the ASB process.

> *"Once you get to know people on a different level… unfortunately our game is that you can't be seen as a authority figure. You've gotta get onto their – you've gotta almost be a friend at times. Not a friend… on a personable level"* (Housing Manager, City Organisation).

Whilst being friends might be one way of understanding the relationship, a blurring of professional boundaries could be one of the risks arising from such a 'friendly' approach, with power imbalances seeming likely to surface in the relationship at some point. However, some tenants highlighted the importance of having a "good"

housing officer who was friendly and approachable (Kerry, Wave A). Mel reported having a good relationship with her housing officer as she felt she was reasonable and had been covering the same neighbourhood area for quite a while.

> *"My officer is pretty bang on with the estate. I believe she's been going down there for quite a while, and we've formed a pretty good relationship"* (Mel, Wave A).

This led to Mel feeling like she could be honest with her housing officer because she believed her housing officer understood the values of people who lived in the area which Mel found supportive. Daisy also reported a good experience with her housing officer:

> *"She was lovely and she just like reassured me that like obviously nothing further [would happen] – yeah, she was like really nice and gave me quite a bit of advice"* (Daisy, Wave B).

The feeling that Daisy was not pre-judged by her housing officer meant Daisy felt able to ask for advice from her housing officer about other matters such as tenant engagement schemes which Daisy found helpful.

However, despite one ASB Manager (Large Organisation) stating housing officers have "some status and [they] are a fair individual with no hidden agendas", many tenants did not feel their housing officer treated them fairly. When Pauline initially applied for her current property, the housing officer refused her application. She successfully appealed against this refusal and was allowed to move in, however, she felt this had resulted in her housing officer having a personal dislike of her, stating, "It's very tense between us" (Pauline, Wave A). When Pauline received an allegation of ASB, she felt her housing officer was more inclined to believe the complaints about her as he did not like her.

> *"I just felt like he doesn't want me there and he's quite happy for these complaints to come in because it gives him a reason to be justified. I don't feel like he wants me there. I think he would love it if he could find reason to get rid of me, but I'm determined there won't be any"* (Pauline, Wave A).

When Pauline raised an issue she had with one of her neighbours, he told her that the person did not live in the block, despite Pauline seeing them every day. As she did not feel listened to by her housing officer when she denied the allegations made against her or when she raised complaints about other neighbours, she began to feel very fearful of future complaints which she felt he would use as an excuse to evict her from the property without evidence.

"I already feel like he's got a lot of power over my life and I know he doesn't like me, so it makes me feel quite vulnerable" (Pauline, Wave A).

Pauline's awareness of her relative lack of power in comparison to her housing officer who, as the ASB Manager above highlighted, has some status, made her unwilling to raise a complaint about the housing officer as she thought it would make things worse.

"It was a really horrible, horrible feeling, because it's, it's not something you expect from somebody in authority" (Pauline, Wave B).

Between the first and second interview with Pauline, she had received a further allegation of ASB, however, this was dealt with by a different housing officer. As the complaint was made during the UK lockdown due to Covid-19, her ASB interview was conducted over the phone.

"His tone from as soon as I answered the phone, he was quite friendly and upbeat from the first instance, where that first complaint, it was, 'you have done this,' and I felt condemned before I'd even opened my mouth. Where the second phone call, it was like night and day, it was very warm, it was very upbeat. And erm, he listened to what I was saying, where I didn't feel I was being listened to at all with the first complaint. I didn't feel that he wanted to take my side of the story, or that I even had a side of the story" (Pauline, Wave B).

The difference between the approaches of the two housing officers had a significant impact on how Pauline both responded to the complaint and felt after the intervention of an ASB interview. Instead of feeling disempowered, Pauline felt that she "had a voice" (Pauline, Wave B). Whilst still upset that a complaint had been made about her, she felt reassured that the housing officer was impartial. This made Pauline feel

more empowered to contact her landlord if she had issues, and, if her former housing officer returned, to ask to speak to someone else, highlighting how institutions are able to use interventions to promote autonomy and empower citizens to engage with services and the wider democratic society more generally (Mackenzie, 2013).

> *"I feel like, as I say, if I had to come to it now, I would have some – I could go above his head maybe or speak to somebody else and resolve things. I don't, I don't feel quite as defeated by it as what I did originally"* (Pauline, Wave B).

Pauline's story highlights how the approaches (or the impartiality) of different front-line housing officers (or street level bureaucrats to use Lipsky's 2010 term) can significantly change how the ASB interventions are perceived, and what impact they have on the alleged perpetrator. For Pauline, who was already struggling to manage her mental health condition, she felt disempowered and fearful after the first interventions, which resulted in her feeling unable to leave her home, highlighting how overlapping vulnerabilities can lead to increasingly challenging experiences of ASB intervention. Alternatively, she felt like she had a voice after the second ASB interview, simply because of the change in housing officer.

For others, rather than a personal dislike, they felt their housing officer was either not fully trained or not interested in their job. Barry, for example, simply said his housing officer was "useless" (Barry, Wave B), and Harry stated:

> *"I don't think she knows the ins and outs to tell you the truth. I may be wrong, but I don't think she does"* (Harry, Wave A).

Rachel believed her housing officer had not had enough training, which resulted in her housing officer referring Rachel to social services without speaking to her. As argued by Brown (2013), whilst ASB practitioners often borrow interventions from multiple fields, such as social work or policing, they generally have not had the same amount of training as officers in these areas. Rachel was shocked when she was contacted by social services and this caused her some distress and worry. She made a complaint about the actions of her housing officer which resulted in her housing officer being given additional training, however, she did not receive an apology.

"They said that she took the right steps and I said, "No she didn't because she never informed me," and they was like, "Oh yeah, we're going to give her more training on it." I'm like, alright, thanks. So, she gets to ruin my life while I've got to fight to keep my kids in my care, and she has more training. Brilliant!" (Rachel, Wave B).

Despite asking to work with a different housing officer in the future, this request was refused. At the first interview, Rachel said she felt that she was no longer seen as a "nice person" by her landlord (Rachel, Wave A) and that the landlord avoided speaking to her directly. The result of this was that Rachel then avoided speaking to her landlord as much as possible and when, by the second interview, she and her children had been victim to domestic abuse and her children had been taken in to care as a result of her violent partner, she did not inform her landlord or access any support that might have been available to her through them. Rachel's experiences of ASB intervention, and specifically her relationship with her housing officer, could be argued to have exacerbated her levels of vulnerability, reducing the likelihood of her accessing support and leading to further marginalisation for an already marginalised individual (Rachel's experiences related to domestic abuse and support are discussed in section 7.4 below).

Overall, where housing officers were seen as friendly, competent and fair, tenants felt they were able to be honest and they would be listened to. Where housing officers were perceived as lacking in training or to have a personal dislike for a particular tenant, this could lead to disempowerment and disengagement with the landlord and housing officer in the future, preventing access to support where it could have been available. With unmet support needs often linked to ASB, this lack of access to support could exacerbate vulnerability and potentially reduce the likelihood of cessation of ASB (Ball, 2019, Campbell et al., 2016a; Jones et al., 2006). This supports the findings of Watts and Fitzpatrick (2018) and Rollins (2018) who argue feelings of hostility towards services can push people away from welfare systems, reducing the efficacy of future supportive mechanisms and increasing vulnerability, an issue which is often counterproductive to the intentions of interventions such as those related to ASB.

7.3: Vulnerability and ontological security

Ontological security, closely linked to the feeling of being 'at home' and in control of one's own surroundings (Carr, 2013; Hiscock et al., 2001; Stonehouse et al., 2020) was set out in Chapter 3 as a component of vulnerability in the social housing context, with access to secure housing leading to higher levels of ontological security which can subsequently reduce or alleviate levels of vulnerability. When feelings of ontological security are negatively impacted through disorder or insecurity (for example, through the use of ASB interventions which may threaten eviction for social housing tenants), this can lead to an internal crisis of the self, impacting how the self, other people and objects are perceived and increasing vulnerability (Carr et al., 2018; Giddens, 1991). Therefore, the actions of social housing providers which may lead to a reduction in ontological security can be argued to increase levels of vulnerability, making this a useful lens through which to explore the impact of ASB interventions (Carr et al., 2018; Fineman, 2013; see Chapter 3, section 3.4). In this study, ASB interventions were reported to have a negative impact on 12 out of 15 tenant participants' feelings of ontological security.

> *"It's a core business thing to have quality homes where people feel safe and where people feel they are able to just get on with their lives and stuff"* (ASB Manager, Large Housing Association).

Whilst the ASB Manager above states it's a core business ideal that people feel safe at home, alleged perpetrators often no longer felt their property was their home, and they did not feel safe there anymore. Rosie's example (discussed in the previous chapter, section 6.2.2) of enforced surveillance, with a camera placed facing her front door, making her feel unsafe to leave her home and contributing to increased levels of alcohol use stands in stark contrast to the ASB manager's suggestion that tenants are left to "just get on with their lives". The feelings of disempowerment (discussed in the previous chapter, section 6.1.1) contributed to a sense of insecurity of the home and of the self (as the quote from Caroline, Wave A in Chapter 6, section 6.1.1 stated: "It made me doubt my own self"), with the risk of losing their home a worry that a number of tenants said was constantly present.

"I just want to feel safe there. I don't want to feel like it could just be taken away on somebody else's say when I don't get the right to defend myself over it" (Pauline, Wave A).

"You're under threat of getting it took of you all the time aren't you for nothing. For absolutely nothing you can – it's just on somebody's whim. Anybody can ring up and say he's doing this and get you kicked out" (Charlie, Wave A).

Additionally, the actions of neighbours, alongside the actions of social landlords, contributed to reduced feelings of being at home. Charlie described asking his neighbour to come to his property and set the volume of his stereo to ensure he did not cause them any noise nuisance when using it, however, their unwillingness to do this led to increased feelings of frustration and reduced feelings of being at home.

"I don't feel at home here anymore, absolutely not. Not since the first complaints went it, it were just like, it were just like stupid and I were trying to sort it out with them [the neighbour], like, come round and set that [stereo volume] up, because I don't know what's annoying you" (Charlie, Wave B).

The analysis presented in Chapter 5 (sections 5.2.2 and 5.2.3) highlighted how negative neighbour relations could contribute to increased reports of ASB, however, it is also worth noting that negative relationships with neighbours can also negatively impact feelings of ontological security (Cheshire et al., 2021; Stokoe and Wallwork, 2003, see Chapter 2, section 2.2.2). For some, the ASB they reported experiencing from their neighbours which encroached into their personal spaces (for example Amelia's neighbour's use of cannabis that she could smell in her home or the noise of neighbours reported by Harry, Michael and Caroline), alongside the increased feelings of surveillance by neighbours (Mel, Charlie and Rosie) and reduced feelings of control over one's own space contributed to tenants no longer feeling their property was their own space.

"I actually got really upset that I was even entertaining a phone call to do with a Coke can in my bedroom window. And I said I'll remove it now and she actually thanked me for removing the can and I thought, hang on a minute, this is my home… am I not even allowed now to have a Coke can in my window?...And it was just a case of like, wow! Am I going to have to get to the level where I phone

up asking if I've got permission to change a lightbulb now? That's how it felt"
(Amelia, Wave B).

When asked whether their house felt like home, many simply responded with "no".
Kerry reported no longer being able to sleep in her property and Caroline, quoted
below, called her home a "prison".

> *"Honestly I say, "Back to my prison." That's what I'm like – if, if my friend rings me,*
> *"Oh, what you up to?" "Ah I'm just on my way home, back to the prison," and*
> *that's how I see it as"* (Caroline, Wave A).

For some, their ontological security was impacted by the fear they may lose their
house in the future, leading to them choosing not to invest in their property
(supporting the findings of Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017 that when tenants do not feel
secure in the property, they may be less likely to invest in it) or feeling unsafe being
in the house.

> *"[There is] just constant worry, it doesn't even feel like properly home anymore,*
> *like I wanna decorate and stuff but I don't wanna start decorating if I'm just gonna*
> *get chucked out. I don't know if I'm safe to stay there… I thought it were better*
> *going with a housing association"* (Jenny, Wave A).

As Jenny above suggests, tenants expected social housing providers to offer a more
secure tenancy in comparison to private landlords, however, the impact of ASB
interventions on feelings of security in their home appeared to call this view into
question. Tenants described feeling unsafe in the property and feeling on edge.

> *"I did feel quite uncomfortable, especially when the children, say, go to bed at*
> *their dad's every other weekend. So when they were away and I was sat here by*
> *myself, I didn't like it, it was quite, I don't know, on edge, sort of thing"* (Daisy,
> Wave B).

> *"I mean I do sort of get up and I'm always checking on the car and just looking out*
> *the windows to see what's going on and things like that"* (Kerry, Wave A).

Whilst some felt unsafe at home, others felt unsafe to leave their home. Rangers
started staying in her bedroom at all times ("I'm even scared to go get my mail in

case I see any of the neighbours," Rangers, Wave A), and Pauline and Amelia didn't feel safe going outside. When linked to Saunders' (1990) definition of housing as a site of ontological security, this analysis could suggest tenants no longer felt in control of their home or free from surveillance as a result of ASB interventions. Ten tenants reported wanting to move property, or feeling they had no choice but to move, as a result of the ASB case.

"Sometimes you have days, you know, after summat's happened, like when you've had a [warning] letter, it doesn't feel right. Where enough's enough. I just want to pack my stuff up and leave" (Rosie, Wave A).

"But it can get disheartening, it can get really – when it were at its worst it can get really, where you'd just [be] like, what can I do? Do I move? Do I give up my job? What do I actually do? Because you can't really feel that there's much of a way out, if you get what I mean" (Mel, Wave A).

However, allegations of ASB can hinder access to future services, disqualifying tenants from the social housing waiting list or leading to poor tenancy references which would essentially disqualify them from a large proportion of both private and social tenancies (Dwyer, 2016; Jones et al., 2006; Power and Gillon, 2020). Similarly, allegations of ASB can lead to an application for a mutual exchange (where tenants essentially swap properties with another social housing tenant) being rejected if eviction proceedings have started (Shelter, 2019).

As ontological security is important for physical and mental health outcomes, as well as for individuals finding their place in society, constructing their own identities and as a mechanism for reducing vulnerability (Carr et al., 2018; Fitzpatrick and Pawson, 2014; Hiscock et al., 2001; Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2016), that a significant proportion of tenants no longer felt their property was 'home' is an important finding. This could also potentially undermine attempts to change behaviour; if a tenant no longer wishes to be in the property, the threat of losing it could become less foreboding. Not only could it lead to them not investing in the property, but it could have negative health outcomes in the future which is unlikely to help change behaviour in the intended manner, with manifestations of mental ill-health often linked to reports of ASB (Flint, 2018; Hiscock et al., 2001; Jones et al., 2006; Saunders, 1990;

Stonehouse et al., 2020; Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2016). ASB interventions have been framed as being necessary to protect a citizen's right to ontological security and feeling at home (Carr, 2010), however, it appears that for alleged perpetrators, vulnerability may routinely be exacerbated by the actions of their social landlords, alongside negative neighbour relations, contributing to a reduced sense of ontological security. With ASB procedures routinely used to catch any and all behaviours perceived by a neighbour (or landlord) as a nuisance (including examples in this research such as going to work, receiving care related to disability or health conditions, lack of parking, lack of soundproofing between properties and being victim to domestic abuse), it could be argued that ASB may not be a sufficiently robust basis on which to deny tenants the right to feel at home.

7.4: Vulnerability, gender and domestic abuse

When social divisions are understood as a key element of vulnerability, how these divisions intersect and interact with other divisions and vulnerabilities can help to better understand individual experiences (Cole, 2016; Kuran et al., 2020). As highlighted through this analysis, it could be argued that all the alleged perpetrators of ASB within social housing more generally and in this study specifically could be argued to vulnerable, however, how social divisions such as gender and disability (which have been shown to be instrumental to ASB intervention experiences in previous research identified through Chapters 2 and 3; Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Scott, 2006; Krayer et al., 2018; Parr, 2009) intersect with other vulnerabilities, such as domestic abuse and/or poverty, can offer a useful insight into the differing experiences of, and impacts of, ASB intervention and a more dynamic account of vulnerability than currently appears in ASB practice (see Chapter 3, section 3.4 for more detail on an intersectional understanding of vulnerability).

The majority of tenants (10) involved in the research were women, and four of these reported being victims of domestic abuse either at the time of, or just before, the research period. The women involved in the study reported different experiences from the male participants which they felt were a result of being a woman, a single mother, or a victim of domestic abuse.

"I think what got said in that meeting, you know, that appeal meeting, because I was in there with these six men, what got said in that meeting might have gone back to [Housing Association], well [Housing Association] men will have been there won't they?" (Rosie, Wave B).

In the quote above, Rosie recalls the meeting held in her landlord's office to hear her appeal against her eviction notice. It is clear from this quote that Rosie did not know the men in the meeting, or whether they were from her landlord or not, suggesting they did not introduce themselves or tell her their job roles. Rosie had to attend this meeting on her own because her solicitor was unable to attend.

"I ended up going on my own because my solicitor, she told us if they couldn't make it on this date, the solicitor had to let them know. She did let them know, but they didn't change the date, so I had to go on my own anyway" (Rosie, Wave A).

The refusal to change the date of the meeting to accommodate Rosie's solicitor, and the fact that Rosie had to travel to a different city to an office where she would meet a room of six unknown men on her own made this meeting especially intimidating for her. Additionally, she experienced financial hardship as she had to pay for taxis to get her to and from the meeting, costing her almost £50 out of her weekly income of £100. It seemed that little account had been taken by Rosie's landlord about how Rosie's gender (and the gender of the staff in the appeal meeting) could impact how the meeting was experienced, or how travelling to an office that wasn't on a public transport route may impact a low-income household. Whilst the ASB Manager quoted above in section 7.2 was apparently joking when he said issues of diversity are "a load of bollocks", the fact that Rosie's gender and low income does not appear to have been taken into account indicates it might not have been a joke and suggests that this minimising of issues of vulnerability may be more deep-rooted than initially made out. Rosie felt she was treated differently by her landlord because she is a single mother.

"I think that's what it is, being a single parent and plus, being a single parent and having another baby while I've been up there" (Rosie, Wave A).

Rosie was not the only female tenant of this study to feel intimidated. Jenny reported feeling like she was being "interrogated" (Jenny, Wave A) when she had an ASB

interview in her home, a feeling that she felt was heightened because she was on her own. Rachel also felt intimidated by her landlord who she felt judged her parenting and demonstrated their power over her by sending a warning letter threatening legal action without speaking to her about any ASB allegation.

"I just feel like they try to intimidate me a bit like obviously going on about how I mother my son, my house and then it's just like, they straight taking legal action, well whatever action against me, without even pre-warning me or giving me heads up or asking me about it first" (Rachel, Wave A).

Notably, none of the men involved in the study reported feeling intimidated by their landlord. These examples show how ASB interventions can be especially disempowering for women who feel they are routinely intimidated and judged by their landlord. This supports the argument that those who could be classed as vulnerable, in this case due to their gender and motherhood, are especially impacted by welfare conditionality in the form of ASB interventions (Crossley, 2017; Madden and Marcuse, 2016; Reeves and Lookstra, 2017).

Four of the female tenants involved in this study had recently been victims of domestic abuse. Jenny moved into her property from a domestic violence refuge, but a week later, her violent ex-partner moved around the corner. She saw him regularly in the street which was very intimidating and scary for her. Jenny received her first warning letter because her window was smashed by her violent ex.

"I left the first one [warning letter] 'cos the first one was the window had been smashed so I took the warning and I left that. But like I say, I didn't smash the window, somebody else smashed the window not me and I was a victim of that. I wasn't like outside with them and then the window – I was inside… they were trying to hurt me or whatever they were trying to do. So, how's that fair?" (Jenny, Wave A).

Not only does this example highlight a failure of services, where a victim of domestic abuse is accommodated around the corner from her abuser, it also shows a lack of understanding and empathy for a victim of a crime she found very distressing. Jenny felt that she was being punished because she was a victim of domestic violence.

"It's not my fault I've been through domestic violence. I didn't say like come here and do this to me, do you know what I mean?" (Jenny, Wave A).

At the time of the second interview, Jenny had not had any further complaints of ASB made against her, however she was still having trouble with her ex-partner and continued to live around the corner from him. She described how when she picked her children up from school and when she went to the local shop, he was often there, approached her and her children and spoke to them, sometimes aggressively, despite a court order stating he was not allowed contact with her or the children. She asked if the police could do anything about this, but they told her they couldn't.

"Because he lives so close to us, there's not like, any kind of order I can get because like, the perimeter wouldn't be big enough, d'you know? Because the shop is very near his house, but it's very near my house as well. So, they couldn't exactly say like, you can't go in the shop, because that's the only shop here" (Jenny, Wave B).

Jenny felt the lack of support she was given to protect herself and her children from her ex-partner was because services blamed her for her own abuse, and believed her landlord judged her because she had come from a women's refuge. This supports the findings of Botein and Hetling (2016), Dwyer et al. (2015) and Meyer (2016) who argue blame is placed on victims of domestic violence for not preventing their own abuse (see Chapter 3, section 3.5.1).

Other tenants who had experienced domestic abuse similarly felt they were not offered any support. Rachel (below) described her injuries at the time a housing officer visited her home.

"They didn't do anything. But I had, I had two black eyes, so it was both eyes, my left and my right, erm… and that was because I had two burst blood vessels in both eyes, so I had four burst blood vessels all together, and my eyes were bleeding, they were bloodshot, they were swollen…" (Rachel, Wave B).

Despite obvious signs of physical violence, the housing officer did not offer Rachel any advice to access support for domestic abuse either at the interview or in any follow-up conversations or letters, suggesting they somehow did not notice the

condition of Rachel's eyes, they chose to ignore it or they did not know how to respond to it due to a lack of training. However, training without policy and procedure change seems unlikely to change how domestic abuse is responded to in ASB cases. Caroline was also not offered any support for domestic abuse, despite her telling her housing officer she was a victim of violence.

"They knew I was going through that situation, so, why didn't they put support in place to get myself and my child out of this property?" (Caroline, Wave B).

Whilst, at the time of the second interview, Caroline had ended the relationship with her violent partner, she still wanted to move from the property due to a combination of distress caused by living in the property where abuse had taken place and being a victim of ASB from her neighbours. Grief and trauma experienced by women as a result of domestic abuse can lead to feelings of displacement and feelings of not having a home, even where they still have a physical property to live in (Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2016).

"It's a painful reminder every day, you know, everything that I've had to endure. Moving forward, it makes it very difficult because then I'm continuing with the abuse from the neighbours. I'm – it almost feels as though I'm still in that domestic violence relationship" (Caroline, Wave B).

Caroline had previously made a complaint about her neighbours who regularly held loud parties which disturbed her and her daughter but never heard the outcome of this complaint. Since then, her neighbour had continued to hold parties, had emptied Caroline's bins into her garden and attempted to kick down her door.

"With this kind of abuse as well, it's just making me, I don't know, I don't recognise myself anymore. I used to be life and soul, now I'm just a shell of my former self" (Caroline, Wave B).

Due to the lack of action taken on her initial complaint, and the lack of support provided for her domestic abuse, Caroline felt trapped, unable to make further complaints for fear of retaliation. As found by Goodman et al. (2016), who explored the benefits of trauma-informed care for survivors of domestic abuse, when survivors of abuse engage with services who do not recognise or understand trauma, this can

exacerbate feelings of both vulnerability and disempowerment. This seems to characterise Caroline's experiences with her social landlord. She referred herself to a domestic abuse charity and a housing support service who said they would help her with her application to move to another social housing property. However, she was told she could not have a housing assessment to complete her application without making further complaints of ASB to her landlord, which she was unwilling to do.

> "I contacted them, they said no you need to go through the right protocol, through the antisocial behaviour team, before we can do an assessment. I said, but why, obviously she's just told me that I'm going to be able to have an assessment. You're telling me one thing, then another, and not only that, given the situation, that it's like they're almost asking for me to put myself and [Daughter] in further danger by obviously making that complaint and having to live in this house in the meantime until they do find me an house" (Caroline, Wave B).

Although the housing team were provided with evidence of the negative impacts on Caroline's mental health from living in a property where domestic abuse had very recently taken place, this was not deemed enough for her to be eligible for the waiting list for social housing. Caroline was unsure whether an ASB complaint was still open against her tenancy although she had not had any further contact from her landlord about this since before her first interview. However, even if she successfully managed to join the waiting list for social housing, some social housing providers are reluctant to house tenants who have previously had reports of ASB made against them, regardless of what the reported behaviour was (McNeill, 2014). It would seem that if domestic abuse is routinely managed as a behavioural issue of the tenant (often the woman), victims of domestic abuse will continue to struggle to move to new tenancies and "start fresh" (Caroline, Wave B). What the stories of all four victims of domestic abuse in this study hold in common is a lack of support given to victims, both during the time the abuse took place and following the end of abusive relationships when victims were trying to recover from the abuse, whether this is due to the abuse not being recognised due to a training need or is ignored. In the case of Jenny, not only did services fail to protect her from her ex-partner by allowing them to live around the corner from each other, they also punished her in the form of a

warning letter when her abuser attempted to gain entry into her property by smashing a window, holding her responsible for her own abuse. As argued by Friedman (2013), the extent to which women should be held responsible for their own and other's behaviour whilst experiencing abuse (including the experience of and/or threat of physical, psychological and emotional harm) should be given special consideration, as the ability of women to control their own and other's actions are extremely limited by the possibility of further abuse. The negative experiences of victims/survivors of abuse shown in this study (and echoing findings of previous studies: Nixon and Hunter, 2001; Hunter and Nixon, 2009; Scott, 2006; see Chapter 3, section 3.5.1), when explored through a lens of vulnerability serves to highlight the injustice of ASB interventions that both hold women responsible for the behaviour of violent partners whilst also not providing support to end or recover from the abusive relationships. These findings suggest that whilst victims of domestic abuse may fall under the current, more normative understandings of vulnerability, in ASB policy and practice this vulnerability can be overlooked or side-lined in favour of punitive responses where behaviour is seen as challenging. Those who are not seen to be fitting neatly into service provider's assumptions of vulnerable (appearing more grateful to services, for example, see Chapter 3, section 3.1), such as perpetrators of ASB, are less likely to be viewed as vulnerable by housing providers (supporting the arguments of Brown, 2015 and Dehaghani, 2018).

Jenny, Rachel and Caroline, whose experiences related to domestic abuse are outlined above, also all reported difficulties with their finances and benefits (which two other female tenants who did not report being victim of abuse reported, but no male participants discussed). Rachel reported:

> *"I'm in rent arrears up to my eyeballs, I'm in like fifteen grand's worth of debt"* (Rachel, Wave B).

All three tenants had benefit sanctions or delays which made managing their outgoings more difficult. Caroline remembered being sanctioned for cancelling an appointment related to her Employment and Support Allowance as her daughter was at home and she wasn't allowed to bring her daughter to the appointment.

"I couldn't attend a face-to-face assessment, you're not allowed to take children there. Not having any family, I couldn't get childcare so, I had to cancel the appointment so they threw me off of that. I appealed it, had to wait a month, so I wasn't in receipt of any benefits whatsoever" (Caroline, Wave A).

Key Informants also discussed the impact of benefit changes on their tenants, suggesting there may have been an increase in reports of ASB as a result of increased poverty.

"If people can't put food on the table that makes them do things that they don't normally do. You know, you're on edge, you have mental health issues, neighbour parks their car in front of you, just, you know, a bumper that goes onto your side and that's it, it's the end of the world, you know and erm unfortunately, that's the environment we're in" (Housing Manager, City Organisation).

As highlighted by the Housing Manager above, additional financial constraints alongside other vulnerabilities could increase reports of ASB and impact how individuals respond to minor behavioural nuisances. Flint (2018) found that alleged perpetrators of ASB often faced barriers when claiming benefits, with their experiences at the Job Centre characterised by what he called symbolic violence. However, in this study, it was mostly victims of violence and women who specifically reported poverty, debt and issues meeting their daily living costs rather than all tenant participants (although the majority of tenants in this sample were women). It is important to note that this does not mean other tenant participants were not also managing poverty (and given the demographic of tenants of social housing, and especially alleged perpetrators of ASB, it is very likely they were, see Hunter et al., 2000, Jones et al., 2006 and Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017).

7.5: Vulnerability, (dis)ability and ASB interventions

Nine of the tenant participants involved in this study declared some form of physical or mental health impairment that affected their ability to live their day to day lives, including the ability to manage their own or their visitors' behaviour or to engage with their housing officer and landlord. Especially prevalent were mental health issues, including depression and anxiety, which tenants reported were exacerbated by ASB interventions. As discussed earlier (Chapter 2, section 2.4, Chapter 3, section 3.5.2

and throughout the analysis in Chapter 6), disabled people (especially those suffering from mental ill-health) are disproportionately impacted by the intensification of welfare conditionality such as the introduction of ASB interventions (Dwyer et al., 2020; Harrison and Hemingway, 2014; Pybus et al., 2019; Shefer et al, 2016). Both Jason and Pauline, discussed in the previous chapter, received allegations of ASB when visits from carers to provide support were misinterpreted as drug dealing (see Chapter 6, sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.3). Rangers provided a particularly illustrative example of the impact of welfare conditionality in the form of ASB intervention. Rangers is a single woman who has multiple physical and mental health disabilities and health impairments. At the time of the first interview, Rangers had received a Notice of Seeking Possession from her landlord, the first step required for eviction proceedings. Rangers had multiple visitors coming to her property throughout the course of her tenancy who caused nuisance to her neighbours and was a victim of violence from her two sons who regularly visited and brought their friends with them. There was also evidence of other people being violent in her home, as outlined in her quote below.

> *"There was a knife incident, I'll hold my hands up to that. Somebody came into my house and tried to stab my son, a meat cleaver, and I threw myself over my son and that's it"* (Rangers, Wave A).

After the Notice was served, Rangers received support from a mental health support worker and housing support worker who recognised she was being preyed on by visitors who were using her flat as a base to deal drugs and financially abuse Rangers and her neighbours. These support workers helped Rangers to stop her sons and these other visitors coming to her home with the help of the police, however, the landlord had stated their intention to progress with the eviction proceedings, despite receiving no further complaints for a number of months. Rangers said she initially did not understand the severity of the complaints that were being made about her as, due to her health issues, she was unable to understand the housing officer when they came to the property to discuss them and left the room before the meeting was finished.

"They all came [lists names], everybody came with mental health and it all just confused me and I went out of the room, so I don't know what was what" (Rangers, Wave A).

Rangers reported this visit was not followed up by a letter, meaning she did not know what the reports about her were or what the result of the meeting had been. When the Notice of Seeking Possession arrived, there were 30 reports of nuisance from the visitors who were preying on Rangers. Throughout the notice, each incident was proceeded by the phrase, "you, and or your visitors," suggesting Rangers was involved in each case. Whilst there was acknowledgement of "vulnerable neighbours", throughout the notice, there was no acknowledgment of Ranger's own intersecting vulnerability, victimhood or health issues that may hinder her understanding of the procedure. Rangers accepted that she should be responsible for visitors when they were in her home, and that the behaviour of her visitors could be antisocial. When asked about whether her definition of ASB was the same as her landlord's, she responded in the affirmative:

"Yes, I would actually, I would, because I don't believe in violence or, you know what I mean, rudeness. I don't agree with that" (Rangers, Wave A).

However, Rangers was unable to control her visitors or prevent them from entering her home as they had stolen and copied her keys. She reported she did not remember her landlord offering her any support and she was held responsible for numerous incidents which highlight her own victimhood. The incident with the knife, recalled above, was included in the landlord's notice as an example of her own ASB. Rangers felt that her landlord's management of the allegations of ASB had a severely negative impact on both her physical and mental health, making her feel she did not recognise herself anymore. She no longer felt able to leave the flat.

"I'll show you a photo of me before you go and it's only two years ago and look how much I've gone under since then. I just want to be happy again and get out and about because I was always an outdoors person, always, no matter what the weather was, you know what I mean" (Rangers, Wave A).

By the second interview, the support Rangers had been receiving had reduced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst her court date for eviction had been pushed back

due to a temporary restriction placed on evictions during the pandemic (Wilson and Cromarty, 2020), this did not give Rangers any feeling of relief. Instead, she felt her social landlord were "not giving me any breathing space whatsoever" (Rangers, Wave B). This supports the argument of Vilenica et al. (2020) who suggest the emergency policy measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, such as the temporary ban on evictions, do not resolve structural issues but instead simply delay housing disasters. After years of cuts to adult social care, older people with health needs such as Rangers are arguably left to struggle amongst what Vilenica et al. (2020, pg. 17) calls "ageist geographies of disposability and dispossession", exacerbating vulnerabilities. Linked to the reduced support Rangers was receiving, Rangers' abusive sons and their friends had started returning to her property, which Rangers felt she had no control over, saying:

"How the hell can I control them? You know what I mean. I can't control, I can't control myself, let alone them. You know what I mean?" (Rangers, Wave B).

When asked what impact the involvement of her landlord had had on her, Rangers described continuous fear of leaving her home and how, by the time of the second interview, she often didn't leave the bedroom.

"It's like being in prison, to be honest with you. I sit in this bedroom, I don't even go into my living room. I'm in this bedroom twenty-four hours a day. D'you know what I feel like? [Sigh] Becoming an alcoholic or a drug addict, many a times" (Rangers, Wave B).

She also admitted that after receiving the Notice of Seeking Possession, she had tried to commit suicide. Rangers' experience highlights ASB interventions can especially impact vulnerable and disabled people who may be less able to meet the conditions placed on them, but also highlights how, as Rangers' behaviour was perceived as deviant, her vulnerability was overlooked in favour of viewing her as both responsible for and able to control the behaviour of herself and her visitors. The impact of these interventions, as well as the reduced support to keep her sons away from her property, exacerbated her vulnerability, increasing feelings of agoraphobia, depression and even attempted suicide, as well as a risk of using alcohol or drugs as a coping mechanism.

In addition to Rangers, a further 11 tenants reported negative health impacts as a direct result of ASB interventions, the majority being related to their mental health.

> *"I feel proper low about the matter. I've got mental health issues as it is, and having allegations made when you know a hundred percent that it's not true, it's not easy to swallow"* (Jason, Wave A).

Whilst for Jason, the allegation on its own impacted his mental health, for others, the ASB interventions that followed the allegation led to deterioration of their mental health.

> *"Me mental health is absolutely deteriorated Kirsty. It's gone absolutely downhill. I feel so trapped. Every day I wake up and I don't even, I don't even want to wake up and it's awful. I just wake up every day and I think, what am I going to wake up to today"* (Caroline, Wave B).

> *"They've made me, a lot of times they've made me really miserable. I mean, obviously I suffer with mental health at the minute with everything that's been going on, but yeah, they can make you really upset to the point when you don't want to leave your house, and are they talking about me and are they going to be staring at me and are they going to be taking photographs of me?"* (Mel, Wave B).

It's interesting that for Mel, it was "obvious" that she was struggling with her mental health as a result of ASB interventions, and yet, the impact of interventions on alleged perpetrator's mental health was not mentioned by any of the Key Informants, suggesting it was not central to their decision-making when they decided how to manage an ASB case.

> *"If I didn't have my little uns, I could've topped myself, because that's how low they got me. And that's what it does to people. You need to really investigate. Especially when it comes to losing their home"* (Rosie, Wave A).

> *"I just wanted to kill myself, I just wanted to end it all"* (Rachel, Wave A).

Like Rangers (above), ASB interventions made Rachel (who did not declare any disabilities in the interview) and Rosie (who had previously reported to her landlord she was struggling with depression) have suicidal thoughts as a result of the fear

they could lose their homes. Whilst Rangers had received a Notice of Seeking Possession, the first step in eviction proceedings, the interventions that Rachel and Rosie reported triggered suicidal thoughts were earlier interventions of an interview in their homes and a warning letter. That these early interventions can (and do) trigger suicidal thoughts is a new finding and shows the importance of supporting both complainants and perpetrators of ASB equally, acknowledging vulnerability and being aware of the impact interventions can have on tenants. Evidence of changes to eligibility for welfare, increasing austerity and stigmatisation of welfare claimants increasing the risk of suicide amongst vulnerable groups has been documented elsewhere and supports this finding (Mills, 2018). The data presented in this research has highlighted how the impact of ASB interventions fall unequally on different groups in society, and especially on those who can be classed as vulnerable.

7.6: Conclusion

Whilst the rhetoric of care and support for tenants who are perceived as vulnerable, or who have complex needs is apparently intensifying at policy level, albeit alongside sanction for those whose behaviour is perceived as problematic (Dobson, 2019; Power and Bergen, 2018), in practice, at least for alleged perpetrators of ASB, little effective care and support appears to be provided on the ground. Only one tenant reported receiving support from her landlord, and one reported being offered a support referral, although this was many months after the initial complaint and after she had accessed support herself from another organisation. The remaining tenants unanimously reported not receiving support from their social landlord, either directly or through referrals to other agencies. The lack of support from social landlords, the impact of ASB interventions which can reduce the security of tenure for alleged perpetrators of ASB and the negative neighbour relations some tenants additionally experienced combined to reduce the ontological security of the majority of tenants, with feelings of being 'at home' reduced, an increased wish to move property, negative health outcomes and increased agoraphobia increasing tenant's vulnerability, highlighting how despite ASB interventions ostensibly aimed at protecting ontological security for tenants (Carr, 2010), it may, in practice, routinely

exacerbate vulnerability by reducing ontological security and increasing negative health impacts for alleged perpetrators.

The negative impacts of ASB interventions were especially evident when speaking to women who had been victims of domestic abuse for whom this abuse appears to routinely have been ignored, result in sanction for the woman (in the case of Jenny) or be minimised (as in the case of Caroline who was not allowed to apply for housing to move away from the property the abuse took place, with little recognition given to the emotional and psychological trauma she was suffering as a result). In relation to disability, again, tenants reported not being offered any support for their physical or mental health. Disability and individual vulnerability appear to be overlooked, as well as negatively impacted, by ASB procedures and interventions, with tenants reporting significantly negative impacts on their mental health, resulting, for some, in suicidal thoughts and/or attempts. The intersection of ASB interventions and unmet support needs is not a new finding (Jones et al., 2006; Hunter et al., 2000), although how social divisions impact this has been found to be especially important in this research. Furthermore, this study has found that routinely, despite the apparent intention of social landlords to support tenants, for those subject to ASB, sanction overrules supportive mechanisms, with tenants overwhelmingly reporting no support being provided by their landlord and vulnerability being exacerbated. By exploring the lived experiences of ASB perpetrators in social housing through the lens of vulnerability, this analysis has shown how social housing providers do not appear to take into account a nuanced understanding of vulnerability when decisions are made about how to intervene and by not doing so, are contributing to heightened insecurity and hardship for already vulnerable tenants. These findings could be used to promote a more conceptually sensitive understanding of vulnerability in policy and practice, with the lived experiences of ASB perpetrators highlighting the downfalls of the current, more normative understanding generally used. If vulnerability continues to be defined narrowly and support side-lined in favour of more individualistic, punitive interventions, it is likely that alleged perpetrator vulnerability will continue to be exacerbated through ASB policy and processes.

Chapter 8: Concluding Chapter

This concluding chapter draws together key findings and themes from across the research project and discusses its contribution to both academic and practice debates. This study has provided new, empirical data from a hard-to-reach and under-researched population, specifically exploring the experiences of alleged perpetrators and the impact ASB interventions have on social tenants behaviour and vulnerability. As discussed in Chapter 3, in recent decades there has been a process of increased individualisation and amplified feelings of insecurity, with factors related to complex structural issues perceived as, instead, related to individual responsibility or choice (Atkinson, 2015; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997). This sense of insecurity has led to the increased use of measures to control or regulate people, areas and behaviours through formal and informal social controls which focus on changing individual behaviour, particularly the behaviour of the most disadvantaged citizens (Harrison and Hemingway, 2014; Innes, 2003). Welfare conditionality has recently intensified, particularly in the arena of housing through, inter alia, the use of ASB interventions (Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018). ASB interventions assume the personal responsibility of the tenant allegedly engaging in nuisance behaviour, with interventions aimed at changing the behaviour of alleged perpetrators (Batty et al., 2018; Flint, 2018; Newlove, 2019; Nixon and Parr, 2006).

Following its introduction in the 1996 Housing Act, ASB has been subject to both academic and media scrutiny (Batty et al., 2018; Burney, 2005; Dwyer, 2004a; 2004b; Flint, 2018; McNeill, 2014). Alongside a backdrop of constrained resources for social housing providers and income cuts to social tenants, ASB interventions can be seen to be targeting the especially vulnerable population now generally found within residualised social housing provision (Fitzpatrick and Watts, 2017; McNeill, 2014; Rhodes and Mullins, 2009; Tunstall, 2018; Ward et al., 2010). Existing research has highlighted definitional issues and negative perpetrator experiences of ASB intervention; however, this research has added up to date knowledge in this area, focusing on the lived experiences of social housing tenants in particular to understand the impact of ASB interventions on those who could be classed as vulnerable and using qualitative, longitudinal methods to explore change over time. Against this backdrop, this thesis explored how social tenants, subject to ASB

interventions both define and perceive ASB, how they experience, perceive and are impacted by ASB interventions and how these experiences change over time. Lived experiences of ASB interventions were considered through the lens of vulnerability, identifying how a more nuanced understanding of vulnerability than currently seen in policy and practice can help to further unpack experiences of ASB interventions.

The study utilised longitudinal qualitative methods with alleged perpetrators of ASB living within social housing properties, bringing marginalised voices to the fore, alongside qualitative contextual interviews with Key Informants from stakeholder organisations. Analysis of the original data produced in the fieldwork undertaken for this project has generated a number of key findings in relation to the definition of ASB and the experiences and impact of ASB interventions over time for often vulnerable social tenants alleged to be perpetrators of ASB. These key findings are individually discussed below, with tentative recommendations for policy and practice provided in each section.

8.1: Defining ASB

It has been evident throughout this project that the definitions of ASB provided in the Housing Act 1996 and in subsequent policies have remained unclear and open to many varied interpretations (Burney, 2005; Warburton, et al.,1997). Issues identified with the Housing Act 1996 definition of ASB (with the definition argued to be vague and lacking in clarity) have been further compounded in subsequent Acts which have broadened the possible interpretations rather than increased precision (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003; Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014). In practice, this means the national definition is left open to interpretation by local stakeholders and front-line staff to decide which behaviour is classed as antisocial and therefore in need of intervention and remedy (Brown, 2013). Whilst stakeholders may continue to argue the definitions of ASB provided by their organisations and in government policy are clear and self-explanatory (whilst also accepting their tenants may have a different definition to them), this does not appear to be the case in practice, with both tenants and front-line staff providing different and sometimes contradictory interpretations of what ASB is and many tenants unable to identify which types of behaviour could be classed as antisocial. This new research from the previously under-researched point of view of alleged perpetrators supports the

arguments of early research which argued ASB was ill-defined (Blandy, 2006; Carr and Cowan, 2006; Mackenzie et al., 2010; Warburton, Liddle and Smith, 1997), suggesting a lack of substantive change in relation to the clarity of the term over time, with little progress in this area since the original introduction of the term. New policies and definitions introduced in this time (Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003; Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014) instead appear to compound the original issues of unclear and catch-all definitions of ASB. Academic and public scrutiny formerly applied to ASB policy and practice appears to have tailed off, with ASB now largely accepted as a permanent feature of the political and social landscape. This lack of scrutiny has allowed ASB to become an accepted part of social housing and criminal justice practice (Brown, 2013). The problems identified by previous research remain and the lack of definition appears to be further entrenched (Edwards, 2015) and, this research proposes, has allowed for the continuation (and stagnation) of flawed processes which do little to serve tenants and that are damaging to those targeted.

The overlap of behaviours classified as ASB caused by the ambiguity of the definition in policy and the overlapping remit of other organisations such as the police and local authorities (provided in Table 5, Chapter 5, section 5.1) highlights how social tenants accused of engaging in ASB may face regulation or discipline from multiple organisations, with a tenant who may be alleged to engage in criminal behaviour facing criminal sanction from the police or Local Authority alongside ASB sanction from their social landlord. This supports the findings of Hunter et al. (2000) who found that criminal prosecutions may be used by landlords as evidence of ASB, even where the social landlord had no other record of ASB and sometimes when the criminal proceedings took place a reasonably long time prior to when they reached the attention of the landlord. With ASB situated within civil law, the standard of proof required for ASB intervention is lower than that of criminal proceedings (Edwards, 2015) and the findings of this research demonstrate how tenants may not receive any opportunity to provide evidence for their own case. Additionally, the line between victim and perpetrator remains blurred (supporting the findings of Flint, 2018; Jones et al., 2006; Nixon and Parr, 2006; Scott, 2006), with the majority of tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB reporting experiencing crime and/or ASB themselves. However, once labelled as 'antisocial' by their social landlords, tenants reported no

longer receiving support for their own experiences of ASB or crime from their neighbours (discussed further below). When framed through the lived experience of alleged perpetrators of ASB, this can be argued to represent a double punishment, and in some cases injustice when, in many cases, intervention into ASB may be inappropriate and related to very mundane behaviour or structural issues. Remembering that the majority of tenants involved in this study experienced multiple complex and overlapping vulnerabilities that impacted their ability to understand or adhere to the conditions placed on them, alongside the punishment of this relatively mundane behaviour, can highlight the inequality and suffering faced by social tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB.

The findings from this work suggest the ambiguity of ASB definitions leads to a number of problems in practice. If social tenancy agreements include a clause where tenants agree not to act in a manner that can be perceived as antisocial, it is important that landlords and tenants both share an understanding of the kind of behaviours this could entail in order for tenants to comply with this clause. The unclear definition of ASB means different housing officers can (and do) approach similar cases with similar evidence very differently, resulting in inconsistent and unclear interventions delivered to the tenant, often due to mundane behaviours such as using the 'wrong' communal door. For over half the tenants involved in this study, the housing officer assigned to their case changed during the course of the ASB process and for some this happened multiple times (something that has not been discussed in previous research). Whilst this may, on occasion, be perceived as positive by the tenant if they develop a better relationship with the new housing officer; for many, this change over time was disruptive and difficult for tenants to manage, resulting in additional time and resources spent on explaining their ASB histories and individual narratives to new housing staff. These unclear or inconsistent interventions can have a negative impact on the tenant, particularly on their mental health, suggesting that, whilst the definitional issues of ASB policy and practice do affect practitioners delivering the policy in the form of time and resources spent on ASB reports that they ultimately decide to take no action on, a disproportionately negative impact is placed on socially marginalised individuals. Additionally, the rhetoric surrounding ASB suggests individual choice and *ir*responsibility, implying those engaging with ASB are choosing to act in a way that is damaging to others

(Batty et al., 2018; Flint, 2018; Newlove, 2019; Nixon and Parr, 2006). With these assumptions heavily supported in policy and practice, issues with the built environment that complainants of ASB find a nuisance, such as a lack of soundproofing or insufficient parking, tend to be perceived as individual behavioural problems rather than structural issues. Furthermore, the findings of this research suggest a significant proportion of ASB may, in reality, be related to structural issues or mundane behaviours (mis)interpreted as individual nuisance, suggesting the underlying assumption of individual irresponsibility does not reflect the lived realities of social tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB.

Neighbour relations over time are also key to understanding how ASB is defined and perceived, with the same or similar behaviour viewed differently depending on the relationship with the neighbour. Neighbour relations are, then, an important contextual element when defining what is ASB, as the extent to which someone is impacted by behaviour may depend on their relationships with the neighbour. In social housing, neighbour proximity and interaction can be increased due to close proximity housing and poor quality properties leading to increased sound transference and opportunity for conflict (Cheshire and Buglar, 2015). The findings of this study support the arguments made by Cheshire and Buglar (2015), Cheshire et al., (2021) and Stokoe and Wallwork (2003) that environment and neighbour relations are vital to understanding feelings of being in control of one's own space and the impact that neighbour behaviour has on individuals in their own home. However, this study, when applying these ideas to ASB and social housing, takes the argument further, suggesting that improving neighbour relations could lead to a reduction of reports of ASB and reduce levels of nuisance experienced by social tenants. ASB interventions, however, were not perceived as generally focused on improving neighbour relations, with tenants in this study suggesting that social landlord involvement could lead to the further deterioration of negative neighbour relationships. It appears that attempts to improve neighbour relations do not factor heavily in social landlord responses, with the vast majority of tenants reporting not being offered mediation by their landlord and landlords' responses apparently focused on quick, punitive interventions (e.g., warning letters) over a more nuanced approach of looking at neighbour relationships as a method for resolving ASB. Whilst mediation is not always appropriate, particularly where there is a power imbalance

between neighbours or evidence of violence (Mackenzie et al., 2010; Nixon and Hunter, 2001), tenants were generally open to the idea of mediation, accepting the need to improve relationships with their neighbours in order to improve their living environments.

All these issues combined clearly demonstrate how the current definition of ASB in policy, with ASB used as a catch-all term for all potential nuisance or irritation to individuals, leads to the inconsistent, unclear, and in some cases unjust, application of ASB interventions where individual behaviour or responsibility is not necessarily the root cause of a specific issue or problem. From a more social perspective, factors such as reductions to welfare and support services, geographic disadvantage and marginalisation and the residualisation and stigmatisation of social housing alongside other underlying vulnerabilities could combine to contribute to behaviour that may then be classed as antisocial. ASB interventions used for issues that have their root cause in the built environment or other structural inequalities are both inappropriate and very unlikely to have the desired outcome. These findings suggest that the current catch-all definition of ASB does not meet the needs of either the housing provider or tenant.

The need for a clear definition of ASB legislation can be reinforced, and the overlap between ASB and criminal or environmental law arguably should be removed. If ASB cannot be simply subsumed within these separate jurisdictions, it could be proposed that any ASB measures are applicable to all citizens in order to improve both clarity and fairness. For tenants who are alleged perpetrators of ASB, its often incomprehensible definition could lead to losing their homes. It is therefore recommended that if ASB policy continues to be perceived by governments and social landlords as necessary, a clear and precise definition should be developed in partnership with those communities affected by it, with this definition subsequently transparently set out in policy and practice documents. Additionally, both landlords and support services are facing times of economic strain, leading to constrained resources. Funding affordable housing provision could improve the quality of homes, the ability of landlords to provide alternate responses to noise complaints (such as installing carpets) and provide support for tenants who are displaying behaviours that could be perceived as ASB. This could lead to fewer complaints of ASB and provides

recognition of the fact that not all issues are behavioural, as often implied by ASB policy and interventions, as well as welfare conditionality more generally (Curchin, 2017; Fletcher et al., 2016; Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018; Wright, 2012). Recognition of the flawed assumptions related to individual behaviour and blame underpinning ASB policy and practice would require a fundamental rethink of where responsibilities lie in society for the problems that are typically laid at the door of alleged ASB perps.

8.2: Unequal and disempowering experiences on an uneven playing field

Successive governments have used social housing providers to roll out ASB interventions (Burney, 2005, Carr and Cowan, 2006; Deacon, 2004). Social housing is a stigmatised tenure, viewed as a site of irresponsible and antisocial behaviour, with social tenants often experiencing multiple vulnerabilities (Batty and Flint, 2013; Fletcher et al., 2016). This means that ASB interventions, used predominantly by social housing landlords on their tenants, are generally used against those who could be classed as vulnerable. This research has argued that alleged perpetrators of ASB may be especially vulnerable before ASB interventions begin, with tenant participants reporting experiencing multiple, overlapping vulnerabilities which compound their marginalisation and which often worsened over time during the course of ASB interventions.

Experiences of ASB intervention were generally negative, with tenants reporting issues of poor communication and disempowering processes (particularly where the landlord's own procedures did not appear to be consistently followed). Tenants were generally left in the dark about the progress of their ASB case, were not kept informed when the case was closed and many did not get the opportunity to respond to allegations of ASB prior to receiving a warning letter. Those that did have a home visit to respond to allegations reported the process as disempowering, suggesting that once they had been labelled a 'perpetrator' they were no longer believed or listened to, leaving them with little ability to defend themselves and their actions against future ASB interventions. Trust in their landlord was eroded through these processes which led to participants reporting avoiding contact with their landlord over time, not approaching them when their circumstances had changed resulting in increased support needs and potentially leading to a further exacerbation of

vulnerability. Whilst Key Informants described an investigatory process of evidence gathering from complainants and alleged perpetrators, who is perceived as a 'victim' and who is seen as the 'perpetrator' appears to be defined at the time of the initial complaint (and therefore arguably in favour of the initial complainant, prior to any evidence gathering). Alleged perpetrators reported that disputing complaints of ASB was reliant on the capacity of the individual to make counter-complaints about their neighbours and the willingness of their landlord to listen to these complaints. The most marginalised groups face the most barriers to both making complaints and to challenging them, suggesting further unequal practice.

Whilst ASB is technically tenure neutral (Burney, 2005, Carr and Cowan, 2006; Deacon, 2004), it appears ASB interventions used by social landlords remain solely focused on the behaviour of people living within social housing. Whilst homeowners or private tenants may be alleged to be engaged in ASB, this study has found that action does not appear to be taken against these households by social landlords (see Chapter 5, section 5.3.4), bringing the findings of Hunter (2006) who found Local Authorities used ASBOs solely against those living within social housing properties, up to date. In practice, this means that ASB interventions are unequal, with the behaviour of social tenants subject to additional scrutiny and control and social tenants left disempowered, unable to use the ASB system as a lever for action themselves when experiencing ASB from their (private) neighbours. The rhetoric surrounding ASB is focused on the behaviours of more marginalised groups, rather than the transgressions of the rich, with extra behavioural responsibilities and constraints placed on those claiming welfare whilst restrictions placed on the rich are reduced (Atkinson, 2006; Flint, 2018). As those claiming welfare in the form of social housing are subject to intensified levels of welfare conditionality, in order to remain in social housing, social tenants must meet additional behavioural requirements that are over and above what is expected of those living within other tenures, such as homeowners. In practice, this means that whilst ASB is tenure neutral and interventions can be used on any person, it is (the relatively more vulnerable) social tenants who face potential or actual sanction from social landlords and can be further punished by other agencies. This arguably reinforces the marginalisation of social housing tenants and those in poverty, increasing their criminalisation, stigmatisation and, in turn, exacerbating vulnerability.

Overall, it could be argued that the focus of ASB policy and practice on the more marginalised populations found within social housing may be intentional, representing a form of symbolic class violence as a catharsis for social anxieties and fear (Atkinson, 2015; Madden and Marcuse, 2016). These expectations of, and experiences of social tenants has been argued to be both unequal and unjust, with the most marginalised tenants facing the greatest barriers and the most stigmatisation. It could also be proposed that the practice of labelling tenants as either complainant or perpetrator at the first report of ASB is removed and replaced by more neutral terms such as 'tenant 1' and 'tenant 2', limiting pre-judgement and sanction before investigation. The need for alleged perpetrators to raise counter-complaints in order to reject an allegation of ASB introduces needless barriers to tenants' ability to respond to complaints, relying on individuals' capacity and resources and is an issue that does not appear to be present in previous literature. Those experiencing the most hardships are the least likely to have this ability. Rather than having two separate pathways for complainant and alleged perpetrator, attempts could be made to treat all parties more equally, receiving the same levels of support, communication and, if necessary, scrutiny, for this disparity of policy and practice to potentially be alleviated. This option is not, however, unproblematic, if the individual discretion of front-line workers is left unchallenged and without anti-discriminatory practice embedded within social housing organisations.

8.3: Impacts of intervention on behaviour over time

The focus on lived experiences offered by this study has offered detailed insight into the impact of ASB interventions on alleged perpetrators over time. ASB interventions are intended to have an impact on the behaviour of alleged perpetrators of ASB (Batty et al., 2018; Flint, 2018). Therefore, how alleged perpetrators perceived and experienced behaviour change was explored in detail. Analysis of change over time was built into the three analysis chapters. Tenants involved in the study described changes that could be either related or unrelated to their social landlord's ASB interventions. For example, changes to the home, household make-up or household relationships may affect the outcome of ASB cases but may not always be directly related to ASB interventions. Thus, the impact of external events, pressures and constraints may positively or negatively impact both behaviour change and reporting

of ASB (as if the tenant has moved away, they are unlikely to make further complaints of ASB), suggesting resolution to ASB may, in some cases, be unrelated to the behaviour of the individual tenant but instead might be related to external pressures, events or changes to relationships within their household make up.

Studies have highlighted how behaviour change is often not a linear process but characterised by periods of progression and regression and influenced both by formal intervention and outside influences (Batty et al., 2018). Exploring impacts of ASB interventions on tenant's behaviour through the use of qualitative longitudinal methods, this project developed classifications of behaviour change from the research data, including required, unintended, no change, resistance to change and intermittent change over time. The most common outcomes related to behaviour change found in this analysis over the duration of the research were unintended changes to behaviour or a lack of change to behaviour (see Table 6, Chapter 6, section 6.2). Unintended consequences related to ASB interventions included relationship breakdown, negative health outcomes, alcohol use and a change to ontological security and use of the home and surrounding areas, many of which had the potential to lead to further complaints of ASB due to exacerbated vulnerability and support needs (Campbell et al., 2016a; Jones et al., 2006).

No behaviour change was often linked to the tenant's perception that allegations of nuisance behaviour were untrue, meaning no behaviour change was necessary and the interventions were perceived as illegitimate. However, there was also evidence of poverty preventing behaviour change, with the required change in behaviour involving a financial cost the tenant was unable to meet and highlighting how vulnerability may make behaviour change more challenging. Resistance was also present amongst some tenants who felt able to reject the allegations and push back against the interventions, questioning the legitimacy of their landlord's requests and ASB interventions, although for some tenants, this resistance was intermittent and changed over time. These findings suggest that how ASB interventions are experienced cannot be viewed as a dichotomy of cessation or lack of cessation of ASB, but more a process of change over time, often including changes which are unrelated to ASB interventions themselves but impacted by changes (or lack of changes) in the wider circumstances of individuals, groups and organisations. This

resonates with the findings of Brown (2011) who found young people's cessation of ASB was often related to increased responsibilities elsewhere in their lives. It would have been interesting to extend the length of this study and to explore change over time over a longer duration to see whether a longer time period presented a different picture when analysing behaviour change (or lack of).

Whilst Batty et al. (2018) did find some evidence of behaviour change as required in relation to ASB in their study relating to welfare claimants and those alleged to be engaged in ASB, this research found that required behaviour change was experienced alongside negative, unintended consequences. Interventions do, however, appear to consistently exacerbate vulnerability and have a damaging impact on tenants (further discussed in section 8.5 below). Batty et al. (2018) acknowledged that even where the required behaviour change was present in their study, there was less evidence of underlying factors (such as poverty or other support needs) related to ASB being resolved, making sustained behaviour change less likely. More sustained behaviour change was linked to access to support (Batty et al., 2018), a factor which was demonstrably missing from the ASB interventions used by social landlords in relation to the tenants involved in this study. ASB interventions, which appear to focus on sanction over support and individual punishment over wider community responses to issues of neighbour dispute and structural problems are, therefore, not only inappropriate and unequal, but also could be seen as problematic in relation to changing behaviour in the required way.

Indeed, it could be questioned whether ASB interventions are required at all, at least in their current format, with focus on sanction over support and emphasis on social tenants, particularly those who could be classed as vulnerable. Further research is needed into the success of alternative responses to ASB, supporting the argument of Mackenzie et al. (2010) who suggests the use of preventative methods that promote community cohesion and trust and that tackle socioeconomic deprivation at a local level. Additionally, recognition should be given to the non-linear trajectory towards behaviour change present in previous studies and which the current process of sanction over support does not appear to allow for. If the required change in behaviour is not evident quickly enough, the perceived needs and rights of

complainants of ASB seem to outweigh the needs of the alleged perpetrator, resulting in further sanction (Brown, 2013).

8.4: A more nuanced approach to vulnerability

Throughout this research, exploring lived experiences of alleged perpetrators of ASB in social housing has shown how the more normative conceptualisation of vulnerability offered in ASB policy and practice is limited. Vulnerability is not just an issue to be resolved or support need to meet but can instead offer insight into all elements of ASB intervention, from what behaviours may be seen as antisocial, who is likely to be seen as a perpetrator of ASB, how they are likely to experience intervention and the impact intervention has on them. A more nuanced understanding of vulnerability as presented in this project allows for the recognition that vulnerability may contribute to reports of ASB where difference is perceived as nuisance and may, conversely, lead to some tenants not reporting ASB (for example, being unable to engage in the reporting process) or finding it more challenging to dispute allegations made about them. The lived experiences of the strong sample of both women and disabled people in this project, viewed through the lens of vulnerability, built on previous studies (Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Krayer et al., 2018; Parr, 2009; Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Scott, 2006) and offered a new insight into how interventions can become tools of increased regulation and punishment of social groups. These findings can be seen to justify the conceptualisation of vulnerability which includes social divisions alongside material factors at its core. Additionally, the consideration of a multifaceted understanding of vulnerability in policy and practice could be used to change practices to mitigate the exacerbation of vulnerability and increased hardship for those at the receiving end of ASB interventions that has been shown through this analysis.

8.5: Impacts of intervention on vulnerability

The working definition of vulnerability constructed for this thesis allowed a novel lens to be added to the lived experiences of alleged perpetrators. As discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.5, despite reduced incomes within the social housing sector, the provision of support to tenants is still held as a core value for social housing providers, with the rhetoric of care for social tenants perceived as having multiple

vulnerabilities intensifying in recent years (Dobson, 2019; Power and Bergen, 2018). For the purpose of this thesis, a working definition of vulnerability was constructed, drawing on the work of Brown (2019, pg. 627), which combines the lived experiences of individual, structural and situational vulnerability. Lived experiences of vulnerability are understood as shaped by social insecurity or harm through a combination of structural inequalities and social divisions, biological fragility, institutional forces and the individual's understanding, choices and experiences as a social actor. Where tenants' behaviour is perceived as problematic or antisocial, this care is likely to be provided alongside sanction (Dobson, 2019). This approach to vulnerability recognises the importance of intersectionality in considering lived experiences, with different intersecting social divisions or individual characteristics impacting vulnerability (Kuran et al., 2020).

As highlighted in section 8.4 above, vulnerability is generally defined and operationalised in practice in a more normative sense as an issue to be overcome (Brown, 2015). Whilst being classed as vulnerable can, in some circumstances, entitle an individual to additional support, with those seen as vulnerable possibly allocated priority need for access to social housing or, potentially, entitled to additional support during the course of their tenancy (Dobson, 2019; Power and Bergen, 2018), those who could be classed as vulnerable may still struggle to secure support in practice, particularly where support is dependent on their behaviour and service providers discretion (Brown, 2014; 2015). Those presenting behaviour that is perceived as challenging may be more likely to be perceived as responsible for their behaviour, falling less neatly into the category of vulnerable or victim and therefore may find it harder to access support (Brown, 2014; 2015). Key Informants involved in this study generally accepted their legal obligations to support tenants with the caveat that behavioural expectations were pushed to the forefront over support. However, this research has highlighted how punitive interventions into ASB appear to far supersede support for alleged perpetrators, exacerbating vulnerabilities and support needs rather than resolving them in most cases, with the vast majority of tenants not receiving any form of support from their social landlord. Tenants were routinely negatively impacted by ASB interventions, especially in relation to their health, with twelve of fifteen tenant participants stating the ASB intervention from their landlord had a negative impact on either their mental or physical health and

wellbeing. Other negative impacts included a lack of support for domestic abuse (leading, in some cases to the continuation of abuse), suicidal thoughts and attempts and negative impacts on ontological security. Compounded by a lack of support, ASB interventions appear to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and, in some cases, contribute to the development of new support needs and increased hardship for the tenant (see Chapters 6 and 7).

Integrating ontological security as an important aspect of vulnerability (explored in Chapter 3, section 3.3 and Chapter 7, section 7.3) is useful in this field, with stable and secure housing linked to individual wellbeing and positive health outcomes (Carr et al., 2018; Fitzpatrick and Pawson, 2014; Hiscock et al., 2001; Woodhall-Melnik et al., 2016). Access to a secure home, where individuals feel a sense of being 'at home' and a sense of ontological security, can usefully be viewed as something that can mitigate vulnerability when available, or exacerbate vulnerability when lacking (Carr et al., 2018). ASB interventions have been framed in relation to ontological security as providing increased rights to citizens to enjoy their homes (Carr, 2010), however, this appears to only be focused on the rights of complainants of ASB rather than alleged perpetrators although, as seen in this research, this distinction may be arbitrary in practice, with alleged perpetrators often victims or complainants themselves. The behaviour of neighbours, alongside the actions of social landlords, contributed to a reduced sense of ontological security and feelings of safety in the property for many alleged perpetrators. Rather than promoting ontological security with ASB interventions, alleged perpetrators reported strongly reduced feelings of being 'at home' or safe in their property, with two tenants referring to their property as a "prison" (Caroline, Wave A; Rangers, Wave B). With ASB procedures routinely used for a variety of behaviours that are either relatively mundane or related to structural issues of the building and surrounding area, this research argues ASB may not be a sufficiently robust basis on which to deny tenants the right to feel at home and to exacerbate vulnerability.

Social divisions appeared to be especially significant in how ASB interventions were used on and perceived by tenants, with women and disabled people reporting especially negative experiences of intervention. The strong sample of women in this study provided insight into their qualitatively different experiences to men, reporting

increased levels of poverty in comparison to male participants, alongside intimidation from their social landlords and housing officers (see Chapter 7, section 7.4). Women experiencing abuse from their partners were especially punished, held responsible for their own abuse as housing providers appeared to view their experiences through the lens of nuisance behaviour rather than supporting women either directly or through referrals to domestic abuse services. These findings support the findings of Hunter and Nixon (2001), Nixon and Hunter (2009) and Scott (2006) who found women were repeatedly held accountable for the behaviour of violent male partners or teenage sons, and builds on them by demonstrating the lack of support provided by social landlords in relation to domestic abuse (at least in the case of alleged perpetrators of ASB). Alongside narratives of abuse and intimidation, women in this sample additionally reported issues related to poverty, highlighting the multifaceted vulnerabilities they experienced over time whilst on the receiving end of ASB interventions.

Disabled people also appeared to be particularly negatively impacted by ASB intervention and sanction. Two tenants in this study became subject to ASB intervention when support provision was misinterpreted as nuisance behaviour (see Chapter 6). One tenant no longer received the daily care she required and neither tenant was offered support (referral or direct) from their landlord. The failure to recognise the need for care (in the form of carers visiting the property) as a necessity for some disabled people highlights how ASB may be ableist and exclusionary in practice, with the norms and practices of able-bodied or non-disabled tenants perceived as acceptable household behaviour and different needs perceived as nuisance. As shown in Chapter 7 (section 7.5), other tenants reported their disability was not recognised by their landlord and health needs, in particular mental health, were exacerbated. Three tenants reported suicidal thoughts following ASB intervention from their landlord, with one tenant attempting suicide, demonstrating the damaging impact ASB interventions can have and representing new findings in this field.

Using the lens of vulnerability to provide a multi-faceted reading of these findings, it could be argued that material factors as well as gender, (dis)ability and other social divisions such as ethnicity play an important part in how social tenants alleged to be

engaged in ASB are treated and impacted by ASB interventions, suggesting the more marginalised populations within social housing (already subject to additional scrutiny) face the most punishment. These findings support the growing body of evidence that welfare conditionality especially impacts those who may be classed as vulnerable and who may therefore find it harder to meet the conditions placed upon them (Brown et al., 2017; Dwyer et al., 2020; Harrison and Hemingway, 2014; Reeves and Lookstra, 2017; Stinson, 2019). Drawing on the concept of vulnerability to explore ASB legislation in the context of social housing, this study suggests that landlords are not meeting their legal obligations to provide support for their tenants. By ignoring issues such as disability, ethnicity, gender or domestic abuse, ASB could be seen as discriminatory practice, with tenants facing punishment without any access to support or recognition of additional barriers they may face to meeting the obligations placed on them. If housing providers are to meet their own responsibilities and rhetoric of care and support for tenants with multiple, overlapping vulnerabilities, a significant change needs to be wrought on practice, with a more careful conceptualisation of vulnerability and anti-discriminatory practice (see Thompson, 2016) built into policy and practice and the consistent use of support services built into processes to ensure landlords meet their own obligations and reducing the damaging impact of ASB intervention on tenants.

8.6: Concluding thoughts

Whilst further research is needed to fully identify a broader range of experiences of ASB intervention (and with acceptance of the limitations highlighted in Chapter 4, section 4.7), the findings from this research suggest ASB interventions are negatively experienced and impact vulnerable people the most, bringing into focus the need to reassess these policies as a whole for efficacy and ethicality, as well as ASB policy and practice in particular. Qualitative longitudinal methods allowed this research to explore nuance and change (or lack of change) over time for those on the receiving end of ASB interventions and highlighted how changes may non-linear and not be as intended by the policy. By exploring the views of alleged perpetrators of ASB, this thesis has presented a critical analysis of ASB policy and practice. The focus on individual behaviour and responsibility as both the cause and solution for the myriad behaviours that fall under the ambiguous remit of ASB contributes to a

punitive, inappropriate, unequal and damaging response to a wide range of issues that may, in many cases, have little to do with individual irresponsibility. Not only do interventions fail to tackle underlying causes of apparently nuisance behaviour, but they are also damaging and, in some cases, could be argued to be discriminatory. Over time, ASB interventions continue to have a damaging effect on alleged perpetrators of ASB whilst alleged perpetrators report it simultaneously fails to change behaviour in the required way. These findings call for a fundamental shift in the way apparently antisocial and nuisance behaviour is defined, perceived and managed, alongside a reconfiguration of the understanding of vulnerability generally offered in policy and practice. This arguably discriminatory policy over-polices mundane behaviours of social tenants, is disempowering for alleged perpetrators and causes additional hardship on already marginalised groups, including social tenants and, in particular, social tenants who are women and/or disabled people.

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Appendix 1: Information leaflet for stakeholders

About me:

My name is Kirsty Toone and I am currently undertaking a PhD in Social Policy and Social Work at the University of York. As well as a 1st class degree in Social Policy, and a Masters in Social Research, I have approximately 8 years industry experience working within social housing sector and managing anti-social behaviour

If you have any questions, please contact me by:

Email: kirsty.toone@york.ac.uk

Telephone: 07803 588 983

The research:

I am conducting a research project to explore the views of social housing tenants subject to antisocial behaviour interventions.

The research uses mixed methods, including the gathering of visual data, diary data and two qualitative interviews with social tenants who are subject to antisocial behaviour interventions.

This project has received ethical approval from the University of York Ethics Committee.

Research questions:

The research aims to answer the following questions:

- To explore how antisocial behaviour (ASB) is defined and perceived by social housing tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB
- To consider how ASB interventions are experienced by social tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB and subject to interventions and whether this changes over time

- To consider the impacts and effectiveness of ASB interventions in relation to changing the behaviour of social housing tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB and to explore whether these change over time

Suitable participants are those who have had a recent allegation of antisocial behaviour made against them which will result in some level of intervention (for example, home visit or warning letter).

Further information for the participants, including a consent form and participant information leaflet will be provided to you prior to the research commencing.

How can we be involved?

I would love to discuss with you in further detail the level you wish to be involved in this research, however, in general I would appreciate help to engage with tenants who have had a recent allegation of antisocial behaviour made against them.

This could be done by providing potential participants with information about the research or by asking their permission to provide me their contact details to give them information on the study.

I would also appreciate help sourcing appropriate local rooms for interviews and ask that you pass on personal safety concerns.

Participants will be compensated for their time in the form of vouchers, with £20 paid after each interview and an additional £20 if they complete a diary.

What happens afterwards?

This research will be used for my PhD thesis and any related publications and summary documents. All personal data will be confidentially destroyed at the end of the research and anonymised research data will be archived with the UK Data Service.

Why should we be involved?

If you choose to be involved, I will keep you updated on the progress of the study and initial findings. Your opinions on the initial findings and the extent to which they ring true with your experiences would be a valuable addition to the research.

The impact of interventions, especially early interventions, from the perspective of those allegedly engaged in ASB has not previously been explored. This means your company would get access to new knowledge as it is emerging which can inform decisions you make regarding ASB and the related interventions.

Appendix 2: Key Informant research information leaflet

About me:

My name is Kirsty Toone and I am currently undertaking a PhD in Social Policy and Social Work at the University of York, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. I am conducting research to answer the following research questions:

- How do social housing tenants subject to anti-social behaviour interventions define and perceive anti-social behaviour, in relation to themselves and others?
- How are ASB interventions perceived by those alleged to be engaged in ASB and does this change over time?
- To what extent are they impacted, or their behaviour changed by these interventions and how does this change over time?

Who can take part?

I would like to speak to 5 expert practitioners on anti-social behaviour to provide context for subsequent interviews with tenants.

What happens if I take part?

You will be asked to take part in an interview that will last up to one hour. You will be asked questions regarding:

- The types and extent of anti-social behaviour that your company manage
- The range of interventions your company uses in response to ASB
- The outcomes and impacts these interventions have on anti-social behaviour

What happens in an interview?

The interviews will last for approximately 1 hour.

The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed after the interview so that we have a true record of what you say. However, only the researcher will know it is you who has said it. Your words could be used in the research output, but it will not be possible to identify you. Transcripts will be anonymised and I will ask you to choose

an anonymised job descriptor and code number. Your name will be changed to ensure anonymity and you will be asked to choose a title that protects your anonymity. If you wish to end the interview, you can do so at any time.

How do I take part?

If you want to take part or would like more information, please contact me at:

Email: kirsty.toone@york.ac.uk

Telephone: 07795 315 127

If I don't want to take part…

Participation is always voluntary. If you do take part and later decide you wish to withdraw from the research, you can do this at any time.

What happens afterwards?

This research will be used for my PhD thesis, academic publications and summary documents but any outputs will be anonymised to ensure confidentially. Some of these publications may be in the public domain. All personal data will be confidentially destroyed at the end of the research and anonymised research data will be archived with the UK Data Service.

My contact details:

If you would like to take part in research or require any further information please contact me:

Kirsty Toone, email: kt776@york.ac.uk, telephone: 07803 588 983

Supervisors at the University of York:

My study is supervised by:

Dr Kate Brown (kate.brown@york.ac.uk)

Professor Peter Dwyer (peter.dwyer@york.ac.uk)

Appendix 3: Tenant participant research information leaflet

About me:

My name is Kirsty Toone and I am currently undertaking a PhD in Social Policy and Social Work at the University of York, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. I am conducting research to explore:

- What is antisocial behaviour?
- What antisocial behaviour interventions are used?
- How are antisocial behaviour interventions (such as mediation or warning letters) understood and thought of?
- What are the impacts of antisocial behaviour interventions?

Who can take part?

I would like to speak to up to 20 social housing tenants who have had an allegation of antisocial behaviour made against them.

This research will give you an opportunity to relay your experiences of antisocial behaviour interventions which could potentially lead to improvements in the intervention and management of antisocial behaviour.

Will I get paid?

After each interview, you will be thanked for your time with shopping vouchers worth £20 after each interview and an additional £20 if you complete a diary.

What happens if I take part?

You will be asked to choose to take part in all or one of the below research methods:

- You will be asked to take part in two interviews, approximately 6 months apart
- You will be asked to find or make an image that describes antisocial behaviour to you
- You may be asked to keep a diary on your experiences of antisocial behaviour over a few weeks

What happens in an interview?

- Interviews will last for approximately 1 hour.
- The interview will be audio recorded so there is a true record of what you say.
- If you become upset or distressed in an interview, you can end this at any time. The researcher will have information about support services that they can pass on to you.

Confidentiality

Your words could be used in the research output, but it will not be possible to identify you. Your name and details will be changed to ensure anonymity. The only time something you say will be passed on is if it exposes a serious risk to you or another person. If this happens, it will be discussed with you beforehand.

How do I take part?

If you want to take part or would like more information, please contact me at:

Email: kirsty.toone@york.ac.uk

Telephone: 07795 315 127

If I don't want to take part…

Participation is always voluntary. If you do take part and later decide you wish to withdraw from the research, you can do this at any time.

Taking part in this research (or not) will have no impact on your housing, benefits or any other services you receive.

What happens afterwards?

This research will be used for my PhD thesis, academic publications and summary documents. Some of these publications may be in the public domain. All personal data will be confidentially destroyed at the end of the research and anonymised research data will be archived with the UK Data Service.

Supervisors at the University of York:

Professor Peter Dwyer (peter.dwyer@york.ac.uk)

Dr Kate Brown (kate.brown@york.ac.uk)

Appendix 3.1: Data information sheet

Project Title: A qualitative longitudinal study into the views of alleged perpetrators of antisocial behaviour on the definition of antisocial behaviour and the success or otherwise of related interventions.

The purpose of this information sheet is to explain how your data will be used and protected, in line with GDPR.

On what basis will you process my data?

Under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the University must identify a legal basis for processing personal data and, where appropriate, an additional condition for processing special category data.

In line with our charter which states that we advance learning and knowledge by teaching and research, the University processes personal data for research purposes under Article 6 (1) (e) of the GDPR:

Processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest

Special category data is processed under Article 9 (2) (j):

Processing is necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, or scientific and historical research purposes or statistical purposes

Research will only be undertaken where ethical approval has been obtained, where there is a clear public interest and where appropriate safeguards have been put in place to protect data. In line with ethical expectations and to comply with common law duty of confidentiality, we will seek your consent to participate where appropriate. This consent will not, however, be our legal basis for processing your data under the GDPR.

How will you use my data?

Data will be processed for the purposes outlined in this notice and in the main information sheet. All interviews will be audio-recorded (with consent). The device used for audio-recording will be password protected and encrypted; the audio file will be transferred to the secure University of York encrypted fileserver at the earliest opportunity and then deleted from the recording device.

If you provide handwritten diary sheets, these will be transcribed and original diary sheets scanned on to the University of York fileserver at the earliest opportunity. Original copies will be destroyed. If you provide electronic diary sheets, these will be anonymised and saved on the University of York fileserver at the earliest opportunity. If you provide visual images, these will be scanned and stored on the University of York fileserver and the hard copies will be destroyed.

You will be required to provide informed consent for participation. This will include your signature. These consent forms will be kept in a locked cabinet that only the researcher has access to.

The findings from the study will form part of the researcher's PhD and may also be published in a variety of formats, including academic journals, conference papers, academic blogs and summary reports. Whatever the dissemination format, the participants' anonymity will remain strictly protected.

How will you keep my data secure?

The University will put in place appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect your personal data and special category data. For the purposes of this project we will ensure that all audio files, interview transcripts, diary sheets and images are securely stored on the University of York fileserver.

Information will be treated confidentiality and shared on a need-to-know basis only. The University is committed to the principle of data protection by design and default and will collect the minimum amount of data necessary for the project.

Will you share my data with 3ʳᵈ parties?

Data will only be accessible to researcher Kirsty Toone and supervisors Dr. Kate Brown and Prof. Peter Dwyer, all at the University of York. After the research has been completed, anonymised transcripts and research data such as images will be archived with the UK Data Service. We will request that other researchers have access to the anonymised transcript for future research, but you will have the opportunity to opt out of this at the consent stage.

Will I be identified in any research outputs?

You will not be identified in any research output. Names will not be used. Consent will be required for us to use direct quotes in publications, but these will be untraceable back to participants.

How long will you keep my data?

Data will be retained in line with legal requirements or where there is a business need. Retention timeframes will be determined in line with the University's Records Retention Schedule. Anonymised transcripts and research data such as visual images will be kept for ten years from the end of the study; consent forms will be kept for three years from the end of the study; audio recordings will be deleted at the end of the study.

What rights do I have in relation to my data?

Under the GDPR, you have a general right of access to your data, a right to rectification, erasure, restriction, objection or portability. You also have a right to withdrawal. Please note, not all rights apply where data is processed purely for research purposes. For further information see, https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/generaldataprotectionregulation/individualsrights/.

Questions

If you have any questions about this participant information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, please contact Kirsty Toone on kt776@york.ac.uk

or supervisor Prof. Peter Dwyer at peter.dwyer@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Acting Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk.

If you are unhappy with the way in which the University has handled your personal data, you have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office. For information on reporting a concern to the Information Commissioner's Office, see www.ico.org.uk/concerns.

Appendix 4: Cover letter to tenant participants

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to provide you with an information leaflet (see enclosed) for some research you may be interested in. This is being conducted by [RESEARCHER] who completing a PhD at the University of York on the experiences of social housing tenants who have been accused of engaging in ASB. [RESEARCHER] would love to speak to you about your experiences, and you will be compensated for your time in the form of £20 shopping vouchers if you take part in an interview.

This research is **not on behalf of [LANDLORD ORGANISATION]**, and anything you say in the interview will not be given to them. If you do or do not take part in the research, it will not affect any services you currently receive, or impact any antisocial behaviour case that may be open.

This research will give you an opportunity to relay your experiences of antisocial behaviour interventions which could potentially lead to improvements in the intervention and management of antisocial behaviour.

If you want to take part or would like more information, please contact [RESEARCHER] at:

Email: RESEARCHER EMAIL **Telephone**: RESEARCHER TELEPHONE

If you don't want to take part, you don't need to do anything. We have not passed any of your details on.

Kind regards,

[STAKEHOLDER STAFF NAME]

[STAKEHOLDER JOB TITLE]

Appendix 5: Consent form for Key Informants

Project title: A qualitative longitudinal study into the views of alleged perpetrators of antisocial behaviour on the definition of antisocial behaviour and the success or otherwise of related interventions.

		Please initial box
1	I have been told what this research is about and what it involves. I have been given an information sheet [dated --/--/--] and have had opportunity to ask questions.	
2	I understand that I do not have to take part in the research. I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without affecting any of the services I receive.	
3	I will not be named in any research reports, and my personal information will remain confidential.	
4	I agree to be audio-recorded. I understand that I can still take part without being recorded if I wish.	
5	I understand that my words, but not my name, may be used in research reports.	
6	I agree for my anonymous data to be archived with the UK Data Service and to be used in future research studies	
7	I agree to take part in the research	

Participant signature: _____   Date: _____

Researcher signature: _____   Date: _____

Appendix 6: Consent form for tenant participants

Project title: A qualitative longitudinal study into the views of alleged perpetrators of antisocial behaviour on the definition of antisocial behaviour and the success or otherwise of related interventions.

		Please initial box
1	I have been told what this research is about and what it involves. I have been given an information sheet [dated ../../..] and have had opportunity to ask questions.	
2	I understand that I do not have to take part in the research. I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without affecting any of the services I receive.	
3	I will not be named in any research reports, and my personal information will remain confidential.	
4	I understand that if the researcher thinks that I or someone else might be at risk of harm, they may have to contact the relevant authorities. But they will try and talk to me first about the best thing to do.	
5	I agree to be audio-recorded. I understand that I can still take part without being recorded if I wish.	
6	I understand that my words, but not my name, may be used in research reports.	
7	I understand that the images I provide for this research may be used in research reports.	
8	I agree for my anonymous data to be archived with the UK Data Service and to be used in future research studies	
9	I agree to take part in the research	

Participant signature: _____   Date: _____

Researcher signature: _____   Date: _____

Appendix 7: Interview guide: Key Informants

Introduction

Before an interview begins:

- Introduce yourself
- Check informed consent i.e., the participant knows what the interview is about and why they have been asked to take part. Confirm they are still willing to take part
- Explain how the interview will be conducted and what will be done with the information they provide
- Provide the participant an information leaflet and consent form and verbally run through both forms with them. Ask for a signature on the consent form
- Check they are happy for me to record the interview and start recording

Key Characteristics

Please can you tell me about your background? And your current role?

How many years have you been in this job role?

How many years has your work been related to antisocial behaviour? To social housing?

How does ASB fit into your role? What sort of things comes up regularly for you?

What is ASB?

Please can you tell me the number of ASB cases your company manages annually on average?

Where do you think ASB sits in your company's priorities?

      i.e., how important is managing ASB for your company?

      Why do you think this is?

What resources does your company use to manage ASB?

What kinds of ASB are most prevalent?

How does your company define ASB?

How would you describe ASB?

Is this the same as how your company would define it? If not, to what extent does this differ?

How do you think your tenants perceive ASB?

If this differs, why do you think this is?

Have you noticed any trends in ASB in recent years? In terms of the type, extent or amount?

Interventions for ASB

Please can you take me through the typical response to an ASB complaint?

Can you talk me through the process of how your company reacts if you receive a complaint of ASB against a tenant?

What would a typical ASB report result in?

What range of interventions might you use?

How and why and when might these different approaches be triggered?

What support might you offer the complainant? The alleged perpetrator?

What sanctions would you put in place/ be available to you?

ABCs?

Warning letters

Injunctions?

Eviction?

How do perpetrators tend to respond when you intervene?

How do responses differ?

What is the effect on their behaviour?

Can you give me an example where someone responded positively? Negatively?

Why do you think this is?

How do you take account of issues such as gender/race/ethnicity/ disability in making decisions about how you might intervene when someone alleges ASB?

Effectiveness of ASB interventions

How would you describe an effective ASB intervention?

What is effective?

Is this different for some tenants? Who? Why?

When using ASB interventions, what is your priority?

How would you describe a successful ASB case?

Can you tell me the last successful case you have worked on?

What about an unsuccessful one?

What is the most challenging case you've worked on?

What made this challenging?

What do you consider to be the most effective response/intervention for ASB?

Can you give me an example where you have used this?

Are there some tenants this would not be appropriate for?

Are there any interventions you do not think are especially useful? Why/why not?

Can you think an example when an intervention did not work?

Why do you think this was?

How do factors such as gender/race/ethnicity/disability affect how interventions are received?

Does your company collect data on the effectiveness of different interventions? If so, would it be possible for me to see these or for you to discuss these figures with me?

Concluding questions

Is there anything else you would like to tell me about ASB or ASB interventions? Or is there anything else I should have asked you about?

What is the most important point/message for me to take away from this interview today?

Please choose a general job descriptor that you wish to be referred to by. (For example, ASB lead/manager etc.).

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this interview with me.

Notes for Interviewer:

Where did the interview take place?

How was this setting? (Quiet, noisy, too many/too few passers-by etc.)

How did the interview go?

Any other feelings about the interview (new avenues of interest?)

Appendix 8: Wave A interview guide: tenant participants

Introduction

Before an interview begins:

- Introduce yourself
- Check informed consent i.e., the participant knows what the interview is about and why they have been asked to take part. Confirm they are still willing to take part
- Explain how the interview will be conducted, including order (I will ask about you first, then about ASB, then about your experiences of interventions) and what will be done with the information they provide
- Provide the participant information leaflet and consent form and verbally run through both forms with them. Ask for a signature on the consent form
- Check they are happy for me to record the interview and start recording

Characteristics

Please can you tell me about yourself?

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Disability

Can you tell me about where you live and who you live with?

What is ASB?

How would you describe ASB?

What kind of behaviours do you think this includes?

Why do you think this?

Do you think your background influences how you understand ASB?

> For example, your gender, household make-up, disability etc.?

> In what way?

How does your landlord define ASB?

> Is this the same as you view ASB?

> Why do you think this is?

Do you think a community can decide what ASB is?

> For example, a street, a village, a group?

The official definition of ASB is behaviour that causes, or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, nuisance or distress. What do you think of this definition?

Has anyone else's behaviours caused you alarm, nuisance or distress?

> When? What was it? What happened? Is this behaviour ASB? In what way?

Do you think you cause alarm, nuisance or distress to others around you?

Do you think the type of person you are plays a part in how you or your behaviour is seen?

> For example, your gender, household make-up, age, disability?

> By your neighbours?

> By your landlord/services?

Visual images.

Have you provided/gathered any images that represent ASB to you?

Can you tell me about it/them?

Why did you choose to use this/these image/s?

Would you be happy to look at these images and tell me what you think of them?

Interventions

Can you tell me what led to you becoming involved with the ASB team (or police/landlord etc.)?

It's my understanding that you have recently had an allegation made against you for ASB – please can you tell me about this allegation?

What do you think about this allegation?

How reasonable was this?

Do you think what you did was ASB?

How did this allegation affect you? Or affect your family members?

Was this the first time an allegation like this has been made against you? Please can you tell me about another time you have had an allegation of ASB made against you?

How reasonable was this?

Do you think this is ASB?

How did this allegation affect you? Or affect your family?

What happened after an allegation was made against you?

Did your landlord/housing officer/the police come visit you? What was said? How did you respond?

What did your landlord/the police do after this visit?

For example, were you sent a warning letter? Offer of support? Offered mediation? Required to attend court? Evicted? Injunction? Charged with criminal offence?

If so, what happened?

Please can you tell me what you think about [this intervention]?

> How did you respond?

> How did it make you feel?

> What impact did this have? How did this impact your day to day life?

> How did it impact those around you?

Did you act any differently as a result of this intervention? If so, in what way?

Do you think your [DEMOGRAPHICS – gender/household make-up/age/disability] has had an impact on your experiences of ASB intervention?

After this allegation and visit, have you had any more allegations made against you?

> If so, please can you tell me about them?

> If not, can you think of why this might be?

Have you had any further contact with your landlord/housing officer/police?

> What form did this take?

> How did you feel about this contact?

I'd like to just reflect on your experience of this report of ASB as a whole. What impact, if any, has this had on you?

> On your household/family members?

> On your life at home?

> On your relationships with your neighbours?

What do you think about ASB interventions as a whole?

> Can you tell me any methods that are used in response to ASB?

> What do you think about these?

Are they a good/bad thing? Are they justified?

How effective do you think ASB interventions are at changing behaviour?

Are there any interventions you think work/don't work?

Which ones?

Why do you think that?

Concluding questions

Is there anything else you would like to discuss about ASB or ASB interventions? Or is there anything else I should have asked you about?

What is the most important message/idea/point for me to take away from this interview today?

Please choose a name you wish to be referred to for this research (this cannot be your actual name to protect your anonymity).

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this interview with me. I would like to you spend a couple of minutes reflecting on what you have said in this interview. Please let me know if there is anything you are uncomfortable about or would prefer me not to consider for this research.

As part of this research I would like to visit you again in about 6 months' time. Are you still happy for me to do this?

Would you be willing to provide me with contact details of a family member or friend for if I am unable to contact you directly for some reason (e.g., you change your phone number, do not have any internet to check your emails etc.)? Facebook? Twitter?

Would you be willing to keep a short diary for approximately two weeks on your experiences of ASB and the related interventions? I can provide you with a digital

template to use, or a hard copy, or alternatively, you can simply keep notes and send them to me.

Notes for Interviewer

Where did the interview take place?

How was this setting? (Quiet, noisy, too many/too few passers-by etc.)

How did the interview go?

Any other feelings about the interview (new avenues of interest?)

Recontact info for second wave

Appendix 9: Example wave B interview guide

Research aims

- To explore how antisocial behaviour (ASB) is defined and perceived by social housing tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB
- To consider how ASB interventions are experienced by social tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB and subject to interventions and whether this changes over time
- To consider the impacts and effectiveness of ASB interventions in relation to changing the behaviour of social housing tenants alleged to be engaged in ASB and to explore whether these change over time

Case note:

[Landlord] tenant in current property for 4 years. Couple living with granddaughter.

ASB reported was that [TENANT] repeatedly knocked on neighbour's door and was aggressive towards them. Also related to parking work vehicle in front of the neighbours' property (no parking restrictions here) - had been parking here for 4 years.

Neighbours' son allegedly recently damaged all the cars parked on the street – police involvement and court date to follow but not heard anything about it for a while.

Previously had fairly positive relationship with neighbours but this has deteriorated since son caused damage.

Things to talk about:

Can you tell me what has been happening since our last interview?

Have you had any more visits from your landlord? Or letters/phone calls?

If so, what happened?

Last time we met, your landlord had been to visit you about a complaint from your neighbour, but you had not heard anything from the visit – did you ever get a follow up visit, letter or phone call about this? Can you tell me about it?

Can you tell me what impact your landlord's involvement has had on you? The visits/letters etc.?

Can you tell me about how you feel about this intervention now? i.e., the warning letter (plus any further interventions that happened)

How have they impacted you? Has it changed the way you act now?

Your home life or enjoyment of your home?

When we spoke, you wondered if your neighbours had a problem with the van parked in front of the house. Are you still worried about this?

I think last time we spoke you felt that if you called your landlord about a complaint, they wouldn't do anything. Do you still feel that way?

When we spoke, you had quite a negative relationship with your neighbour because of the damage their son had done to your cars. Is this sill the case?

When we met, you felt like your neighbours actions towards you were antisocial but you did not want to put in a complaint about them. Did you decide to complain to your landlord? Why/why not? What's happened.

Have you been offered mediation?

Would you have wanted to do this?

When we met, there was an upcoming court date about the damage to the cars but you hadn't heard anything about it for a while. Did you find out what happened about this?

Have you since been offered any support from your landlord?

How have you found this support?

Do you think this has helped you manage the ASB complaints that have been made against you? OR to manage your tenancy?

One of the things that has regularly come up in my interviews is that some people do not feel listened to by their landlord. If you were given the opportunity to have a say in how Yorkshire Housing manage their ASB complaints, would you want to be involved? Or how they manage their organisation more generally? If no, why not? If yes, how would you want this to look?

Appendix 10: Tenant vignettes

This appendix offers short vignettes of the tenant participants involved in this study, including the allegations that have been made about them, as well as any reports of nuisance or issues they have with their neighbours. These vignettes offer a brief overview of the interventions used and a small insight into how this impacted the tenant.

Amelia

Amelia is a disabled woman with multiple health conditions who has lived in her current property for around 7 years with her partner and children. She is also experiencing bereavement and grief related to familial illness. Her property sits between two properties that are shared-ownership, meaning they are part-homeowners and part-private rented. Complaints about Amelia started not long after she moved in and range from allegations related to having CCTV and arguing in the street with neighbours for which she has received multiple warning letters. Amelia has also raised complaints about her neighbours on both sides of her property including cannabis use, intimidation, harassment and loud music but, as they are not social housing, her landlord did not raise these reports as ASB cases. The police put in place a harassment order against the neighbours at one side and arranged mediation over the garden fence for the other side, which Amelia felt did not end with a resolution. The issues with her neighbours and the involvement of her landlord have impacted Amelia's mental health and she now feels anxious leaving the property. She no longer feels she has a home.

Barry (and Kerry)

Barry and Kerry are an older, married couple who have lived in their current property with their granddaughter for around 4 years. Barry suffers from a physical health condition. Barry and Kerry received a complaint about parking Barry's work vehicle in front of their neighbour's property (where it had been parked for the 4 years they lived there) and for knocking on their neighbour's door and allegedly acting aggressively. Barry's neighbour's adult son had reportedly damaged multiple cars parked on the street one evening on his way home, for which he was later arrested.

Barry had knocked on his neighbour's door to speak to the son but was not able to speak to him. Barry explained this to his housing officer at the home visit and has not heard from them since. By the time of the second interview, his neighbours had moved away and there had been no further action on his ASB case, however, Barry had still retired from his work in order to prevent further complaints about his work vehicle. Kerry felt anxious and unable to sleep as a result of the ASB interventions and the issues with her neighbours. Barry and Kerry no longer feel 'at home' in the property and hope to move.

Caroline

Caroline is a single mother living with her daughter. She is a victim of domestic abuse and does not have a familial support network. Caroline had received a complaint about noise nuisance and had a property inspection at her landlord's request. Caroline told her housing officer there was damage in the property from her ex-partner who had been physically abusive to her and asked for help repairing this. She was not offered any support for domestic abuse and the damage was not repaired. Caroline has ongoing problems with her neighbours who had been verbally abusive, threatening, and had attempted to kick down her door. She had raised a complaint with her landlord but no action was taken and the issues escalated. She is now scared to report anything further to her landlord as she fears repercussions. The abuse, ASB interventions and issues with her neighbours have had a severely negative impact on Caroline's health and she no longer feels safe in the property. She hopes to move.

Charlie

Charlie is a single man who has a long term, physical health condition. He is also a carer for his friend. He has lived in his flat for around 8 years and there have been allegations of noise nuisance from his property for about 4 years, since his neighbour moved in. Charlie denies all reports of noise nuisance. His landlord attempted to take an injunction out against Charlie regarding allegations of noise nuisance from a period of time when Charlie was in hospital. Charlie successfully appealed the injunction but is still receiving warning letters for noise nuisance despite, as he believes, no evidence of nuisance. Charlie reports feeling uncomfortable in his

home, scared to play music and making his visitors whisper in his flat to be sure his neighbour does not hear anything.

Daisy

Daisy is a single parent living with two young children. She moved property between the first and second interview to a larger home to avoid overcrowding. Daisy had an argument in the street with her neighbour after comments were posted about her and her children online. The argument led to a report of ASB being raised by another resident on the street about Daisy. A home visit was conducted but no further action was taken. Daisy is generally happy with how the case was handled but did feel uncomfortable being at home alone for a few months after the allegation and stopped her children playing outside for a few weeks after the allegation despite not being asked to do this. Between the two interviews, Daisy moved to a new house as she was overcrowded in her original property.

Harry

Harry is a widowed, older man living on his own in a flat above a single, young woman with mental health issues. Harry also suffers from physical and mental ill-health. At the time of the first interview, Harry had a negative relationship with his neighbour and had made a complaint about noise nuisance and an untidy garden about his neighbour. His neighbour had also raised an ASB complaint about Harry for being verbally abusive towards her and entering her garden without permission. Harry received a warning letter but no action was taken about the complaint he raised. By the time of the second interview, during the Covid-19 pandemic, Harry and his neighbour had become friends and offered each other emotional and practical support. Harry no longer had any complaints about his neighbour, and no further action had been taken on the ASB case against his tenancy.

Jason

Jason is a single, severely disabled man living in a bungalow. He receives daily care at multiple times of day to meet his basic needs. He received an allegation of drug dealing because visitors (carers) came to the property multiple times a day for short periods. He received a home visit from two housing officers but could not remember

what was said at this meeting as he reported feeling very angry and shouting at them. He cannot stop the carers coming as he needs the care. Jason did not complete a second interview so it is not certain whether any further action was taken about the ASB report or the impact interventions had on him in the long-term.

Jenny

Jenny is a single parent living with her two young children. She was a victim of severe domestic abuse and moved into her social housing property from a women's refuge. Her eldest son (10 years old) has mental ill-health and is accessing counselling. After she moved into the property, her violent ex-partner moved around the corner from her. She reported this to her landlord but they said there was nothing they could do to help her. Shortly after this, her ex-partner smashed her window and tried to gain access to her property. Jenny reported this to the police and her landlord but received a warning letter for ASB about the damage to her window. Later, Jenny received a second warning letter when an allegation was made that someone was outside her property shouting abuse at her. The only thing she thought it could have been was her son who appeared to re-enact the previous incident and shouted, "I'm going to smash your window." Jenny received a third warning letter for another report that someone shouted abuse at her. Jenny missed the home visit arranged for this interview and received a warning letter stating that as she had missed the appointment it was assumed the reports were true. Jenny did receive some support for domestic abuse arranged by the women's refuge she had left but did not receive any support from her landlord.

Mel

Mel is a single parent who lives with two of her children and her nephew. She has one older son who has moved out. She has lived in her current property for about 14 years. Over this time, she has received regular allegations of ASB from her neighbour about noise and children nuisance. She has a negative relationship with this neighbour that has deteriorated over the years she has lived in the property and states they both complain about each other, although he is an owner-occupier and no action has been taken against him. When her neighbour makes a complaint, she routinely receives a warning letter without having a conversation with her housing

officer to tell her side. She has a fairly good relationship with her housing officer but does not believe that the warning letters are retracted after she gives her side of the story, even where she denies the complaint outright. Most recently, she received a complaint about her dog barking and was sent a warning letter and a Pet Owner's Contract which she refused to sign. No further action was taken. She reported ASB interventions had a negative impact on her mental health and have made her feel uncomfortable at home.

Michael

Michael lives with his partner and two teenage children and has lived in his property for around three years. He is recovering from cancer and a recent operation meaning he is unable to work. Michael received an allegation of ASB after confronting his neighbour who had been rude towards his daughter. His neighbour had also called the police. His landlord sent him a letter arranging a home visit while he was in hospital. He contacted them to rearrange and they said they would get back in touch but they did not contact him for over 6 months. When they did contact him, his neighbour, who was a private tenant, had moved away and no further action was taken.

Pauline

Pauline is a single woman who has severe social anxiety and depression for which she often needs daily support. She received ASB allegations of drug dealing and drug use as her brother visited her for several times a day to check on her and provide care. These visits were misconstrued as related to drug use. She has a very negative relationship with her housing officer, who she believes dislikes her, and when he conducted the home visit, he refused to meet her brother or accept her explanation. Pauline received a warning letter for drug use, dealing, and for using the front communal door which her housing officer told her was a fire door (although other residents also use this). Pauline's brother stopped providing care and her relationship with him deteriorated as a result of the warning letter. By the time of the second interview, Pauline received another allegation of drug dealing, this time after she had bought and sold a car during the Covid-19 pandemic and had met the car owners in the car park. A different housing officer managed the complaint and

Pauline felt understood and listened to. She was not sent another warning letter and the case was closed without further action. Pauline felt more empowered after her conversation with this housing officer and felt more confident that if further allegations were made, they would be managed fairly as long as the former housing officer did not return.

Rachel

Rachel is a single mother with a toddler and new-born baby. She received a warning letter about leaving a sofa in the communal garden area but did not have a home visit or phone call from her housing officer to discuss this. Prior to this letter, she had a home visit related to her rent arrears where she displayed signs of physical violence, including bleeding and swollen eyes, but was not offered support for domestic violence. She reported having suicidal thoughts as a result of the interventions from her landlord. By the time of the second interview, Rachel's children had been taken into care as a result of physical violence from her then-partner towards them. The sofa had been removed (although not by Rachel) and there had been no further ASB interventions, as well as no offers of support from her landlord. She has fallen further into debt with her landlord and other organisations and referred herself to a debt advice charity.

Rangers

Rangers is a single woman with multiple physical and mental health problems, including dementia. She was being preyed on by her sons, who were physically violent to her, and a number of other visitors had taken over her flat and used it as a base to financially abuse Rangers and her neighbours. When Rangers received a Notice of Seeking Possession, the first step in eviction proceedings, there were 30 reports of nuisance from the visitors who were preying on Rangers. Rangers accessed a mental health and housing support worker after receiving her notice who helped her to remove the visitors from her flat and change her locks. Despite a halt to complaints for a number of months and evidence she had been a victim, her landlord intended to proceed with the notice. By the time of the second interview, Covid-19 had resulted in a halt to the support Rangers was receiving and the visitors, including her sons, were again using her flat. There was also a delay to the

eviction hearing, but her landlord still intended to proceed with this when allowed. Rangers stated the landlord involvement had resulted in her attempting suicide and being unable to leave her bedroom.

Rosie

Rosie is a single parent living with her two young children. She also has two adult sons who have moved out. Rosie has lived in her property for around 5 years and has received complaints of ASB from her neighbour throughout this time. Rosie believes her neighbour wanted her friend to move into the property and took an instant dislike to Rosie. Allegations range from noise and children nuisance to drug use and drug dealing. Rosie denies all allegations and has previously successfully appealed a Section 21 Notice of Seeking Possession (the first step in eviction proceedings for Starter Tenancies which includes mandatory grounds for possession if taken to court). Rosie had previously had problems with alcohol use but felt she had recovered from this before moving into the property and was no longer drinking. However, by the time of the second interview, had relapsed and was drinking again which she said was in part a result of the ASB interventions. Her landlord had installed CCTV on to her neighbour's property which faced Rosie's front door. This made her feel spied on and uncomfortable leaving the house. Rosie has had suicidal thoughts as a result of the ASB interventions and has had to start taking depression tables prescribed by her doctor.