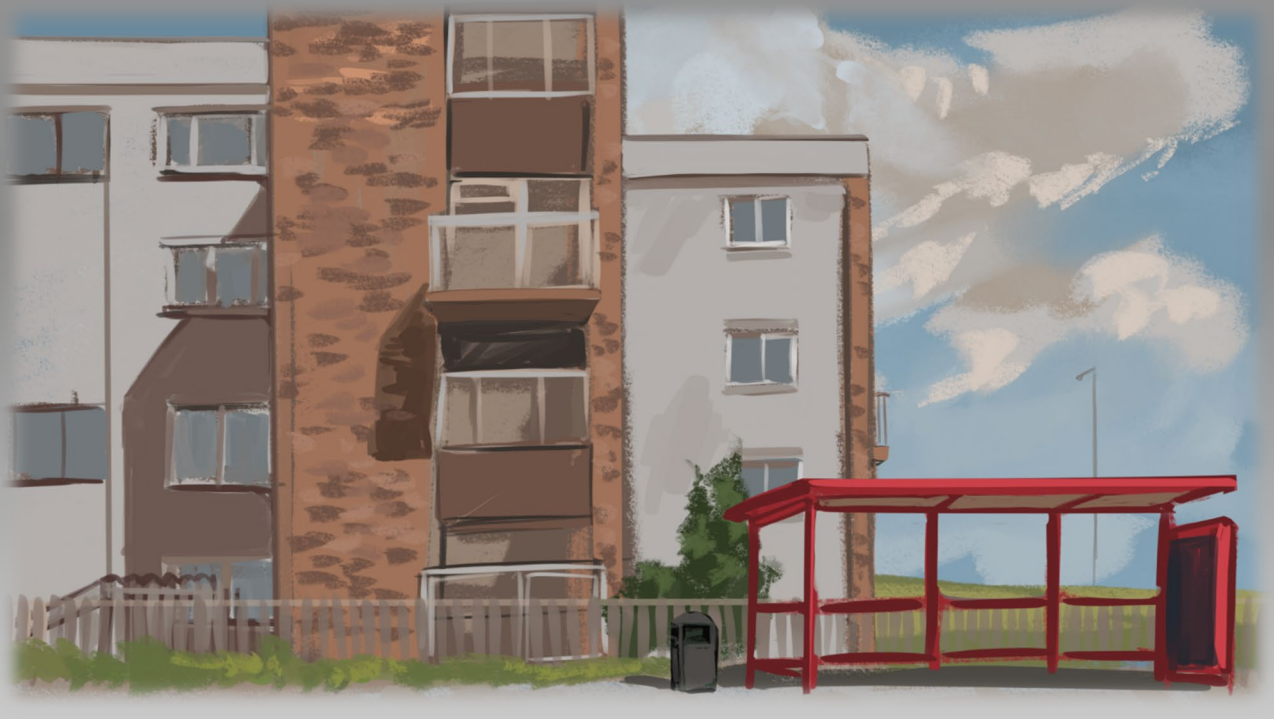
WE SUFFER IN SILENCE

Exploring experiences of antisocial behaviour for people who have moved to the UK



Dr. Kirsty Cameron, Leeds Beckett University
Dr. Jack Liuta, Community Researcher at Migration Yorkshire

May 2026

LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

Migration Yorkshire

Contents

Executive summary

Whilst the definition of antisocial behaviour has been subject to much debate (Burney, 2005; Cameron, 2023; Carr and Cowan, 2006), it can broadly be defined as a continuum of behaviours that may cause alarm or distress, ranging from relatively minor nuisance, such as an untidy garden, to more serious behaviours such as abuse and violence. Whilst some of the behaviours that could be termed antisocial are also criminal behaviours, for example assault or harassment, not all antisocial behaviour falls under the remit of criminal law (Flint, 2018). Nevertheless, it is widely accepted that the impact of antisocial behaviour, regardless as to whether it is also criminal behaviour, can be significant and long-lasting (Murray et al., 2024; Newlove, 2019).

There has been a lack of research into how people who have migrated experience antisocial behaviour, meaning the type, extent and impact of antisocial behaviour experienced by this group is missing from academic and practice debates. With recognition to the lack of existing information on antisocial behaviour experienced by people who have migrated to the UK, this research set out to explore:

- To what extent do migrants living in the Yorkshire and Humber region experience antisocial behaviour (ASB)?
- How do experiences of antisocial behaviour impact migrants and their families?
- How can experiences of migrants or recently settled populations of antisocial behaviour inform future research, policy and practice?

Alongside a literature review of existing research, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with 28 participants, made up of 15 people who moved to seek asylum and safety (which includes four people with asylum seeker status and 11 people with protected status such as refugee status or Ukraine scheme visa), five people who moved for other reasons such as work and study, and eight professional stakeholders working with these groups. Ethical approval was granted by Leeds Beckett University School of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

The findings of the research suggested that whilst participants struggled to provide a clear definition of antisocial behaviour, they nevertheless recognised examples of antisocial behaviour they had either personally experienced, witnessed or heard about. Most participants believed much of the antisocial behaviour they had experienced was targeted at them due to their ethnicity, migration status or gender, or a combination of these identities. This behaviour

could be perpetrated by others in their local areas, or nearby towns, who were strangers to them, neighbours, people living in the same accommodation or by service providers such as the police, welfare services, security guards or shop assistants.

Whilst not all antisocial behaviour discussed was targeted, or would be classed as 'serious' antisocial behaviour, these behaviours nevertheless had an impact on those experiencing it. Feelings of humiliation, frustration, anger and unhappiness could have long term impacts on an individual's health and overall wellbeing, and led to victims feeling unwelcome and unsafe in their local communities or homes. Additionally, impacts on physical health included the immediate impact of physical assault as well as a reduction in sleep which can impact overall physical and mental health. There was some recognition that the impact of antisocial behaviour was worsened by existing circumstances and previous trauma, leading to more severe and longstanding impacts, and the impact of antisocial behaviour on children's feelings of safety and on their overall mental health was seen as worse than the impact on adults, especially for children who had migrated to the UK and already experienced changes to their living circumstances that may have been outside of the family's choice or control.

Whilst more reporting of antisocial behaviour was seen as necessary to get a better understanding of types, level and impact of antisocial behaviour on migrant populations, there were numerous barriers to reporting, including language barriers, lack of understanding of the process, belief nothing will be done, negative perceptions or experiences of the police, fear of repercussion and more personal barriers such as feeling overwhelmed with other issues, a wish to appear grateful or to keep to themselves. To prevent antisocial behaviour, participants spoke of the attempts to improve community cohesion, more calling out of inappropriate and antisocial behaviour when witnessed and more investment in services, welfare provisions and schools.

Introduction and context

Antisocial behaviour has recently been creeping back up the public agenda, with both major parties outlining new strategies responding to antisocial behaviour in the run up to the most recent general election in 2024. However, whilst some have argued that the definition of antisocial behaviour is 'common sense', numerous commentators have suggested that antisocial behaviour does not have a precise definition (Burney, 2005; Cameron, 2023; Carr and Cowan, 2006). With no clear list of behaviour that can be classed as antisocial, the definition is left open to individual interpretation by individuals, services and the government (Mackenzie et al., 2010). That being said, there is a general acceptance that antisocial behaviour can be understood as a continuum of behaviours from relatively minor nuisance such as untidy gardens or littering to more serious behaviours such as harassment, abuse and assault. Many of the more serious behaviours may also fall under the remit of criminal law, whereas less serious behaviours may be more likely to be dealt with under civil laws (Flint, 2018; Millie, 2008).

Whilst the lack of clear definition can be seen as problematic for individuals to be sure what behaviours to avoid, it can also be seen as an opportunity for communities to set acceptable standards of behaviour within their own context rather than national policy placing these restrictions across the country (Mackenzie et al., 2010). When antisocial behaviour has been experienced, witnesses and victims have a number of reporting routes, including through the police, housing providers, local authorities and, for some groups, through Migrant Help.

The impact of antisocial behaviour on communities and individuals has been long recognised, with the accumulative impact of antisocial behaviour over time recognised as a detrimental effect on victims' sleep, health, work and relationships, as well as feelings of distress and of being unsafe at home (Newlove, 2019). In the recent Victims' Commissioner Report, victims of antisocial behaviour reported longstanding, severe impacts on their mental health following experiences of antisocial behaviour. Additionally, people reported their daily routines being disrupted and feeling the need to move home to prevent further antisocial behaviour (Murray et al., 2024). Whilst antisocial behaviour could, in theory, happen anywhere, it is more likely to be reported in areas with high levels of poverty and disadvantage, with victims and perpetrators of antisocial behaviour likely to be from relatively low income backgrounds (Cameron, 2024; Deacon, 2004, Jones, 2006).

Whilst antisocial behaviour has been subject to political and academic scrutiny, little research has been conducted on antisocial behaviour experienced by migrant populations. A literature search on the topic found no existing research into antisocial behaviour victimisation from the point of view of migrants, although there was some existing research into ethnic minority populations more broadly as perpetrators of antisocial behaviour (Prior, 2009; Prior and Spalek, 2008). Whilst there has been some suggestion that more ethnically diverse areas may experience more antisocial behaviour (Prior, 2009; Prior and Spalek, 2008), there is not a consensus on this point. Taylor et al. (2010) found no link between neighbourhood ethnic heterogeneity and perceived levels of antisocial behaviour and argued that poverty was a bigger factor in the likelihood of experiencing antisocial behaviour.

The lack of research in this area suggests the need for a research project to explore the extent and scale of antisocial behaviour experienced by migrants and how it is being responded to. Therefore, this research sought to answer:

- To what extent do migrants living in the Yorkshire and Humber region experience antisocial behaviour?
- How do experiences of antisocial behaviour impact migrants and their families?
- How can experiences of migrants or recently settled populations of antisocial behaviour inform future research, policy and practice?

The next section will outline the methods used to answer these research questions.

Methodology

The research has made use of qualitative research methods in order to meet the research aims and answer the research questions. As well as a literature search for existing research on the topic, qualitative interviews were undertaken with those who have knowledge or lived experience of antisocial behaviour. Participants were recruited through Migration Yorkshire partner organisations who shared the research with their staff and service users, including through information leaflets and a short, poster style leaflet that could be left on desks and in communal spaces. 20 participants, made up of 15 people who moved to seek asylum and safety (which includes four people with asylum seeker status and 11 people with protected status such as refugee status or Ukraine scheme visa) and five people who moved for other reasons, such as work and study, took part in the research. Across these groups, 11 participants were female, nine were male and three declared a disability or health condition that impacted their daily lives. Participants held nationality in countries which included Afghanistan, Bahrain, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Hong Kong (2), Iraq, Kenya, Nigeria (2), Portugal, Ukraine (4) and Zambia. Two participants did not disclose their nationality.

Participants lived across the Yorkshire and Humber region, but the majority of participants lived within West Yorkshire. Please see table 1 for more information. These participants were asked to either choose a pseudonym or have one given to them for the purpose of the research and were compensated for their time with a 'thank you' payment as acknowledgement of their time and for sharing their stories.

Additionally, eight professional stakeholders working with migrant populations were interviewed, including five female and three male participants.

Stakeholders interviewed worked across local authorities, charitable organisations and counselling providers and have been provided generic job descriptors such as Voluntary and Community Sector (or VCS) Worker along with pseudonyms. Ethical approval was granted by Leeds Beckett University School of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee. The study rigorously adhered to principles of informed consent, voluntary participation and the avoidance of harm.

Table 1: Table to map participant's social identities and country of origin

Pseudonym	Country of origin	Gender	Disability
Adaku	Nigeria	Female	No
Animo	Ukraine	Female	No
Ashor	Undisclosed	Male	No
Belinha	Portugal	Female	No
Chun	Hong Kong	Female	No
Famous	Gambia	Male	Yes
Ganna	Ukraine	Female	No
Kalma	Zambia	Male	No
Lea	Undisclosed	Female	No
Léonie	Bahrain	Female	Yes
Madiba	Chad	Male	No
Maria	Kenya	Female	No
Muyeke	Democratic Republic of Congo	Male	No
Nassar	Iraq	Male	No
Nathalie	Mauritius	Female	Yes
Paul	Ukraine	Male	No
Raisa	Ukraine	Female	No
Sherlock	Nigeria	Male	No
Yuet	Hong Kong	Female	No
Zarak	Afghanistan	Male	No

Participants took part in semi-structured interviews, with a combination of in-person, phone and online interviews based on participant preference. Migrant interviews were conducted by a community researcher working at Migration Yorkshire and stakeholder interviews were conducted by the lead researcher or community researcher based on availability. The collaborative approach undertaken with Migration Yorkshire and lead researcher at Leeds Beckett University, and especially the work of the community researcher who had shared knowledge and experiences with the research population, helped to ensure the research was conducted with due respect to, and recognition of, migrant communities (Crow, 2021).

Fieldwork was conducted between June 2024 and October 2024. During this time, riots took place across the UK targeting asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants, although the majority of interviews took place before these incidents. This led to increased calls from potential participants asking to take part, although at this point, the maximum number of participants had been reached, meaning some people were turned down. Due to safety concerns for both researcher and participants, these riots also led to the increased use of online or phone interviews for the few remaining interviews. Recorded interviews were transcribed and uploaded to NVivo for thematic analysis. It is the findings of this thematic analysis that the report will now discuss.

Findings and discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings from the analysis of interview data from migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and stakeholders. These findings are organised into understandings and experiences of antisocial behaviour, experiences of reporting or responding to antisocial behaviour and the impact antisocial behaviour had on those who experienced it. Finally, participant proposals for preventing and responding to antisocial behaviour more effectively are presented.

'There are no boundaries': understandings and experiences of antisocial behaviour

Participants had varying understandings and experiences of antisocial behaviour since they had moved to the Yorkshire and Humber region, although it is worth noting that, whilst people found it hard to provide a precise definition, participants were able to recognise examples of antisocial behaviour from their experiences or from conversations with others. This section explores the findings related to how participants understood and perceived antisocial behaviour in relation to themselves and others, as well as the types of antisocial behaviour they had experienced, either personally or had heard others talking about. The section starts with general understandings of antisocial behaviour before exploring specific experiences of ethnicity or status targeted abuse, gender targeted abuse, antisocial behaviour from children or young people, experiences of unsafe neighbourhoods, antisocial behaviour within accommodation and antisocial behaviour from service providers and professionals.

<u>Understandings of antisocial behaviour:</u>

Participants were not always clear about what antisocial behaviour was in the context of England and Wales, however, there was recognition from participants and stakeholders that the scope of antisocial behaviour is broad and that people could define it differently.

> 'I checked the Leeds website and UK government website and Google (for) generally the definition, what is antisocial behaviour? Because we need to be careful how it is defined as there are lots of different definitions. And it surprised me that the Kirklees website, UK Government website and Google all are different.' (Yuet)

Yuet's comment aligns with the findings of existing research into antisocial behaviour which has repeatedly found the term is not consistently defined and is open to interpretation. This can lead to confusion for both those experiencing antisocial behaviour, and those who have been accused of it (Cameron, 2023; Carr and Cowan, 2006). Many participants linked antisocial behaviour to criminal behaviour, with some suggesting that all criminal behaviour is antisocial.

> 'I think the same as- I think anyone that commits a crime is an antisocial behaviour' (Yuet)

Yuet, and others, suggested that criminal behaviour was typically antisocial due to breaching the laws of the country or potentially causing other people distress by doing so. There can be overlap with antisocial behaviour and criminal behaviours, however, defining antisocial behaviour as only a form of criminal behaviour can be problematic, as behaviours that are not necessarily criminal but could still be defined as antisocial by authorities may not be reported (Flint, 2018). Indeed, participants did suggest that some behaviour was not serious enough to be treated formally by the police or other services as antisocial as it was not also criminal behaviour. In contrast, behaviour that had the intent to annoy or disrespect someone was also highlighted as antisocial by some migrants.

> 'In my own understanding, it's behaviour that makes it uncomfortable for people around you, causing distress, seeking to

> cause annoyance to your neighbour, annoyance or distress' (Sherlock)

In Sherlock's quotation, and in other examples provided by participants, there was a clear link to the wording in antisocial behaviour policy which defines antisocial behaviour as behaviour that causes 'harassment, alarm or distress' or 'nuisance or annoyance' (Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, 2014), suggesting some knowledge or awareness of the more formal terminology.

Six participants and one stakeholder suggested that it was a specific type of person who caused antisocial behaviour, stating it was people with a lack of boundaries, a lack of care for other people or who have experienced trauma in their past that is influencing their behaviour towards others.

> 'What I'm trying to say that there are people (who) are likely to cause the antisocial behaviour. There are no boundaries' (Kavita, Local Authority Migration Officer)

Whilst it can be tempting to believe that certain people are antisocial, and others are not, evidence suggests that many people who are alleged to be engaged in antisocial behaviour may also experience antisocial behaviour themselves, suggesting significant overlap (Cameron, 2024). This could mean it may be certain contexts or environments that antisocial behaviour is more likely to occur in, rather than specific personality types. For example, numerous commentators have suggested that marginalised areas are more likely to have a high prevalence of broader social challenges and pressures, as well as report and experience high levels of antisocial behaviour (Burney, 2005; Home Office, 2023; Taylor et al., 2010). With this research set across the Yorkshire and Humber region, where there are numerous areas with high levels of deprivation, this could result in an increased likelihood of experiencing antisocial behaviour in these areas. Whilst participants largely tended to define antisocial behaviour in the relatively abstract examples given above, when asked for more specific examples of types of antisocial behaviour, examples given were theft, violence, racist or xenophobic abuse, noise, nuisance from young people and vehicle nuisance (both on public transport and by people driving vehicles). Many participants found it easier instead to talk about examples of their own experiences rather than the concept in abstract.

Some participants explained that there appeared to be different standards of behaviour in the UK than in their home country. For example, two participants discussed incidents where, when travelling on public transport, they saw young people put their feet on the seats, which would not have been acceptable in

their home country, however, seemed to be accepted by other people on the bus and bus drivers.

> 'Where I live in the Ukraine, if the person puts their feet on the seat on the bus and so, it is rude and shows no respect for people because no one wants to sit where your muddy feet have been and that's what I see quite often' (Raisa)

Raisa and Paul described how the behaviour would not be accepted and would lead to intervention from those who witnessed it, as Paul describes below:

> 'If we speak about my experience in my country, if you saw something like that you would go to the bus driver and say can I kick him off? And he would say of course, let me help you, and we would together kick him off' (Paul)

In contrast, others described how it would only be more serious behaviours that would receive intervention in their home countries, and this meant they minimised some examples of behaviours that some would describe as serious or did not think to report the behaviour to authorities.

> 'I think basically it stems up from where we are coming back from, back home, those services were not there, or even if they were there, people never used to be serious. So, maybe at the back of my mind, if I report this, are they really going to be serious?' (Maria)

These examples suggest that what people define as antisocial behaviour, and what they would report, would not only depend on the context they were experiencing it in (e.g. in the home, on public transport, at different times of day), but also on their experiences of what was acceptable standards of behaviour in countries they have previously lived in.

<u>Targeted by ethnicity or immigration status: experiences of hate crime</u>

The vast majority of participants felt that antisocial behaviour was targeted in some way, largely due to ethnicity or immigration status.

> 'Some people are very racist. And that was a feeling. And that was the first thing that came to my mind. It was, because I thought that is a matter of race. Of where I came from and how I look' (Adaku)

Participants described examples of verbal abuse and statements such as, 'get back to where you came from' (Julius, VCS Worker) being said to them when

they were in the street, or, 'the house should be for an English family' (CJ, VCS Worker) by neighbours. One participant, Ganna whose neighbour kept moving the communal waste and recycling bins to in front of Ganna's window, pushed her and said that she hated Polish people. Ganna said she wasn't Polish, she was Ukrainian, to which the neighbour responded, 'Oh well, even worse. I hate Ukrainians even more than Polish'. Examples of clear racist or xenophobic attitudes and behaviours were common, often from strangers in the street, or sometimes from direct neighbours. Participants also reported less overt forms of antisocial behaviour that they believed derived from racist attitudes.

> 'It looks like this family targets that house because they know people come here are asylum seekers, they come from different places and we don't know the rules and we don't know what is supposed to be done' (Maria)

Maria felt people targeted those living in houses that were known to house asylum seekers and refugees to make them feel uncomfortable or unwelcome. Other participants also described houses that would have eggs thrown at them, or hotels where people would congregate to protest against immigration. Louis (Local Authority Unaccompanied Children Support Worker) reflected on an example of repeated, unwarranted complaints about a property they rented for unaccompanied children.

> 'One of the properties that we rent and use for all care leavers, really, has been verbally attacked… and complaints put in about them (care leavers) being antisocial and having people around at the property which was not found to be truly correct and noise nuisance and things like that… It was more racially aggravated by the neighbours not wanting these young people living next door to them' (Louis, Local Authority Unaccompanied Children Support Worker)

Rather than reasonable complaints of antisocial behaviour, Louis suggested that the complaints were prompted by a wish to not have migrant teenagers in the property next door. The stereotyped view of young people in general, and care leavers in particular, appeared to have been compounded by immigration status and ethnicity, leading to an increased likeliness of stigmatised assumption and antisocial behaviour.

Whilst participants did not believe all the antisocial behaviour they experienced was targeted at them due to their ethnicity or immigration status, the majority of participants had examples of racialised interactions that could be classified

as hate crimes and many of the examples discussed in the remainder of this report had some element of xenophobic attitudes or actions.

Gender targeted behaviours

Female participants experienced antisocial behaviour that they felt was targeted at them due to intersecting dynamics of gender and ethnicity. Chun described multiple examples of men shouting at her when she was on her own. She also gave an example of a man slapping her arm, described below.

> 'I feel vulnerable, there is a man slapping my arm. If we had a fight, I'm quite sure he would win. I didn't feel safe enough to say anything' (Chun)

Interestingly, Chun reflected that whilst she had numerous examples of antisocial behaviour when she was on her own, if she was with her partner, who was White British, she did not experience any problems. It seemed to her that when she was on her own, she was viewed as more of a target for antisocial behaviour. Similarly, Adaku also described incidents of antisocial behaviour when she was on her own which she felt was aimed at her because she was a Black woman.

> 'There were two young men trying to, provoking me about how I look. Why I'm in the neighbourhood because I was new in the neighbourhood. I don't belong in the neighbourhood. And just talking, just talking about talking on how to make me talk and maybe get violent with me' (Adaku)

These examples appeared to be intentional and aimed at making women feel uncomfortable and, as Chun reflected on, appeared to be a reminder of the man's physical strength and control over women. Adaku was especially fearful of potential sexual violence and, along with Chun's experience, appeared to be representative of how many migrant women felt in these situations. Some women, including Adaku, changed their behaviour because of these experiences, trying not to go out alone or out at night. One 16-year-old, described by a stakeholder, was not comfortable walking to the shop at the end of her street due to comments and wolf whistles from men who congregated outside.

> 'She doesn't like walking to the corner shop at the end of her street because there's like groups of men that stand outside and she's had comments… She's about, like, 16. Yeah. Like wolf whistles,

> comments that make her feel uncomfortable' (Freya, Local Authority Migrant Project Officer)

Nathalie also reported what she described as a 'fetishising' of migrant women which some men would openly talk about.

> 'Another friend, she's Chinese, when she went to a nightclub, she was getting comments and sexual advances from all White men who kind of fetishise her in a specific way. They told her specific things which showed they were fetishising her, they have these ideas about Asian women, so it's also like invading the boundaries, overstepping boundaries' (Nathalie)

The intersection of gender, ethnicity and immigration status appeared to combine to lead to an increased likelihood of antisocial behaviour towards female migrants, and in particular, an increased likelihood of sexualised comments and intimidating behaviour from men that increased levels of discomfort and fear. Whilst the impact of antisocial behaviour will be talked about in more detail below, it was clear that women in particular felt the need to adjust their own behaviour in order to avoid antisocial behaviour.

<u>Antisocial behaviour from children or young people</u>

Participants and stakeholders alike discussed antisocial behaviour from children or young people. Often, this was related to general nuisance behaviour, rather than targeted nuisance, for example, some participants referred to young people on public transport causing minor disturbances, putting their feet on the seats, or dropping rubbish. Other, more personal examples were given of young people throwing eggs or rocks at the houses of participants or congregating outside participants' houses, which people found intimidating and distressing. One participant described a young girl who repeatedly tried to enter their house and put rubbish in their garden.

> 'She try every time to enter to our house to make any problem… I saw her every times (all the time), sometimes in the beginning of the day, sometimes in the middle, sometimes in the end of the day, at midnight. She tried to collect the trash and put it inside our yard' (Nassar)

There were also examples of bullying from young people towards migrant children. Four participants and three stakeholders raised this.

> ‘(I have heard) many accounts of children being in schools having their hijabs pulled off. You know, being harassed, being bullied’ (Adriana, Counsellor)

Examples ranged from name calling to physical assault. Julius (VCS Worker) described an example where a boy from Bangladesh experienced taunting from children at the school.

> ‘He put up with it and put up with it until I think it was out one day on a playground, not at the school, and the two boys came up and started off again. And he pulled one down and sat on him. That was what he did and the boy went home and told his mother he'd been deeply assaulted and beaten up by this boy and she went to the police, made a complaint and the police pulled him in’ (Julius, VCS Worker)

This incident was followed by ten older teenagers coming to the boy’s house where ‘they beat him up on his doorstep’ (Julius, VCS Worker). When the police were called for this incident, Julius (VCS Worker) reported:

> ‘The police said they had to take a balanced view of this and he'd provoked this boy and therefore, you know no further action was taken’

Parents of children experiencing bullying struggled with how to respond. Some reported feeling guilt for bringing their children to somewhere that was unsafe for them. Participants described not sending children to school on their own and were aware of other parents who took similar measures, even when the journey to school was relatively short. Belinha described how her husband intervened when some teenagers were kicking their son and spitting in his bag. Her husband pushed them away and brought their son home. The teenagers followed them home and threw big stones at them. When his son was inside, Belinha’s husband slapped one of the teenagers’ hand.

> ‘Somebody called the police; the police came and changed everything and took my husband to the prison. Because my husband was not allowed to slap the boy, who tried to kill my son. The boy kicked my husband on the neck, and he was on the ground. He (had a) broken wrist because of the two boys’ (Belinha)

This example shows the difficulties for participants in deciding whether (or how) to respond when experiencing antisocial behaviour, particularly from young

people. Whilst it is often not seen as appropriate for adults to intervene in behaviours of children and young people who are not part of their own families in the UK, this is not always the case in other countries, complicating the situation further. There were other examples of young people being verbally and physically abusive towards adults, particularly when they were in groups. Kalma said that he had 'been robbed' (Kalma) by groups of young people who, when he came across them, were verbally and racially abusive.

> 'When you run into them, they tend to use very, very offensive language for you, like 'monkeys', you know, "go back to the Bush"' (Kalma)

On one occasion, Kalma was physically assaulted in the street and required medical attention. Two other participants described verbal abuse from young people in groups using racialised offensive language.

In contrast, some identified that adults would verbally or physically assault migrant children. Adriana (Counsellor) referred to an incident where a neighbour was caught 'hitting children with a bucket'. This incident was caught on security cameras installed by the Local Authority which resulted in the neighbour being evicted from the house, however, the antisocial behaviour had been occurring for a significant length of time before security cameras were put up. Ashor described how his children were bullied by adults in public spaces, such as the park and other play areas.

> 'I taught my children when anyone shouting or screaming in racist words just take your phone and record them. And some people get angry when they are recorded because they want to insult other people freely. But once, when they when they see someone recording, they run away because they're afraid of consequences' (Ashor)

Ashor's response to these incidents of teaching his children to react in a specific way (in this case, filming the people being aggressive towards them) shows how people who have experienced migration may feel that they have to control themselves and limit their reactions to antisocial behaviour to better protect themselves. Ashor found that filming people being antisocial encouraged them to see their behaviour in a more shameful light and, ultimately, prevent them from continuing the behaviour. Rather than expecting someone else to call out this behaviour, children were asked to instead try to show these adults how their behaviour was inappropriate. Additionally, the need for video evidence appeared necessary to result in intervention from services in these cases.

Unsafe neighbourhood

Participants and stakeholders reflected on an increased likelihood of antisocial behaviour due to living in areas of high levels of deprivation within the Yorkshire region.

> 'A lot of the migrant communities, especially when they are new to Leeds, and definitely the refugees and asylum housing, it will be in the deprived areas. That's either where they get housed or once they get like refugee status and finding their own accommodation, that will be where people can afford to live' (Freya, Local Authority Migrant Project Officer)

> 'So when our guests arrived in UK they were mainly hosted by the sponsors and hosted in the outskirt areas, you know, the more wealthier parts of Leeds. And they soon realised the reality was when it came to privately rented, the majority of the privately rented was available in either Beeston, Holbeck or Armley (more disadvantaged areas) (Kavita, Local Authority Migration Worker)

As Freya and Kavita allude to, it is common for migrants to live in more deprived areas, which can lead to an increased likelihood of experiencing social issues such as antisocial behaviour (Burney, 2005; Home Office, 2023; Mort and Morris, 2020). In the quote from Kavita, she mentions 'sponsors', referring to people who took part in the Homes for Ukraine scheme, a government scheme where citizens across the UK can host refugees from Ukraine. She suggests that whilst the sponsors of the scheme may have hosted families in relatively wealthy areas of the city, when it came to moving into their own accommodation, people may move to areas that are relatively more disadvantaged. Raisa described how she felt walking down the street in a less wealthy area where there was a lot of rubbish or other environmental nuisance.

> 'I find some areas of Keighley and Bradford, they are covered with litter, with rubbish. When you walk in a street with loads of rubbish, you don't feel confident. You feel scared, well, I feel myself scared because you see this street is abandoned. Nobody cares about it' (Raisa)

As well as rubbish or graffiti, visible drug use (or assumed drug use) prompted participants to feel unsafe in certain areas of the city or towns they lived in or visited for work, shopping, services, or education.

> ‘It’s in central Bradford, I don’t know why but there’s a lot of drug addicted people’ (Paul)

Participants described areas becoming dangerous at nighttime, with more overt drug use and dealing in certain areas, loud music, groups of people who were intimidating to pass or who were more likely to approach people, especially lone women, on a night.

> ‘When I'm walking with people, they'll be like, oh, like I like living here. And this is, this is what I like. But like it all changes at night time. Like, that's that that seems to be like a shift that people talk about’ (CJ, VCS Worker)

Often, although participants may prefer not to go to certain areas or go out after dark, they had little choice due to shift patterns or requirements to attend work, education, or the Job Centre, leading to an additional level of stress or worry when needing to go into these areas. Whilst the antisocial behaviour discussed in this section so far was not targeted at the participants, they were still impacted by it, making efforts to avoid the areas they felt unsafe in.

Participants also reflected on the diversity of the areas they lived in, suggesting that when migrants and other recently settled populations lived in areas with higher levels of diversity, they were less likely to experience antisocial behaviour, although not everyone agreed with this suggestion.

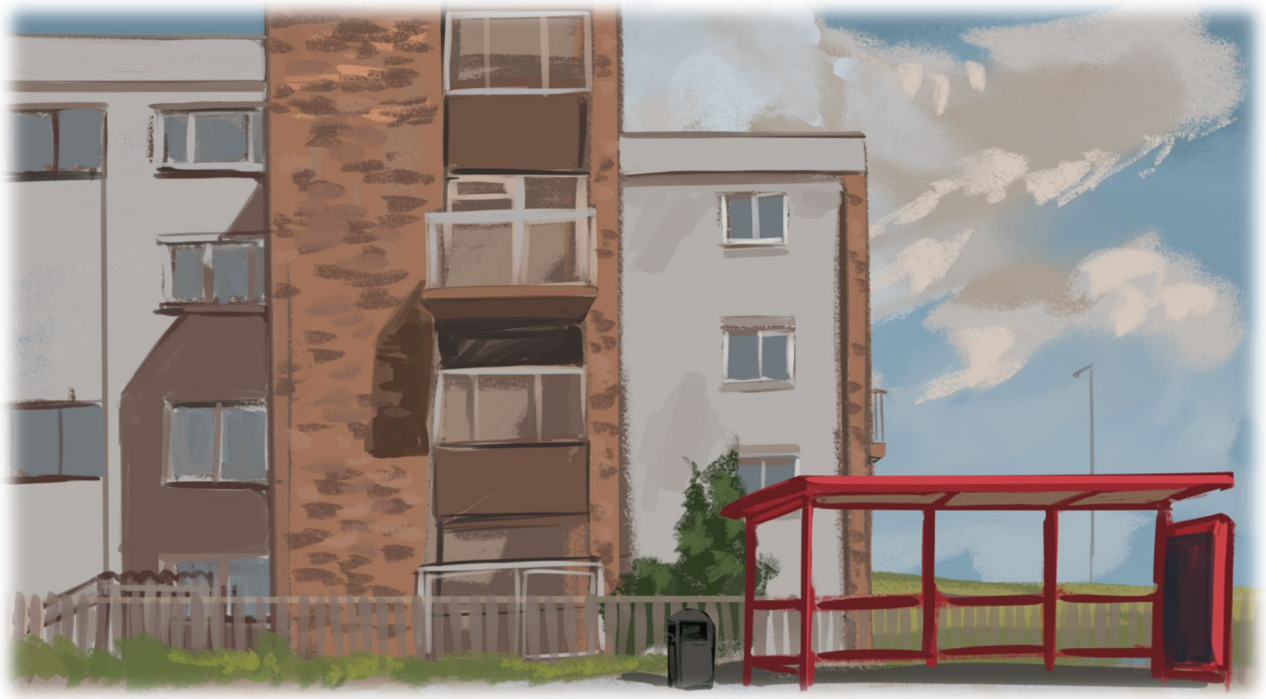
> ‘I think when you are living in a multicultural society, you have less and less of those antisocial things compared to someone who's different… I would say, who's like a migrant living in a place where there's not many people like you, so people would experience that more than when you live in a place where you have many people like you’ (Muyeke)

Zarak described being the first Muslim family in the area and reported that when he and his family, particularly his wife and daughters, left the house, people, mostly children, would come up to them, ask questions, or laugh at them. He felt this was because they were dressed differently.

> ‘One time, they were trying to remove the scarf from my daughter’s head and say what is this?’ (Zarak)

Whilst Zarak was largely matter of fact about these experiences, suggesting it wasn’t unreasonable for children to be curious when new people move to the area, he was upset that parents of the children did not intervene to prevent the

family being followed, approached, or harassed. As previous research by Migration Yorkshire and the IPPR highlighted, asylum seekers and refugees often have limited choice about where to move to, and in areas of limited diversity, this may lead to fear for both established residents and asylum seekers and refugees moving there (Mort and Morris, 2020).



> ‘Because I was new there and I was- it was a complete English area, no one Asian, no, you know, other race or religion or other countries. I was the only one living there’ (Léonie)

For Léonie, whilst the area was not generally unsafe, she and her family felt highly visible in the area and this led to increased feelings of vulnerability and fear of allowing their children outside without them. Rather than have her children go on the bus to school on their own, she or her husband travelled with them to ensure their safety. These fears were not wholly unfounded; Léonie did experience antisocial behaviour in her local area when accessing a food bank, where another person using the food bank shouted at her and said that the communal treats on the tables for people waiting was not for her.

> ‘One lady, she just stood up and started shouting on me. She started shouting on me. She started calling me things and you know, she was really, really, really rude. She was very, very rude. And she tell me things, “Why you taking, you know, this candy, that's not for you, that's not for you to take with you. Why are you taking this?”’ (Léonie)

This incident led to Léonie leaving the food bank without any food and being scared to leave her property, stating:

> 'I was scared. I was scared to go out. I stayed in (our) home for weeks. I never explored the area' (Léonie)

The incident reinforced Léonie's original reservations and fears about the area, believing that the lack of diversity in the area meant she was more likely to experience racially targeted abuse. It is important to note that antisocial behaviour was experienced in areas with higher levels of diversity too. Nevertheless, many participants agreed with Léonie that they were more likely to be victim to targeted antisocial behaviour in areas with less diversity.

Antisocial behaviour from others within accommodation

Whilst the majority of the antisocial behaviour reported in this study was from people outside of the home, for example, neighbours or people in the local community, there were some examples of antisocial behaviour from people within the home. For example, Animo and Ganna (below) both described examples of antisocial behaviour from hosts in the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme.

> 'It was antisocial behaviour starting from household issues and even some women talked about (how) they were threatened, and they were not allowed to use kitchen or bathroom when their hosts were there' (Animo)

Whilst the Homes for Ukraine scheme was seen as an opportunity to provide a temporary respite for refugees, it also represented a shift towards private humanitarian hospitality, relying on private individuals to provide appropriate and safe spaces for refugees. Existing research has suggested the scheme offered precarious housing reliant on the hosting family's sometimes transient emotional attachments, changing circumstances and with hierarchical and conditional hospitality offered (Crossley, 2023, Daoust and Dyvik, 2024). The story provided by Animo was supported by Ganna who said she was asked by her hosts to pay for everything that had been purchased before she arrived with her family. These examples appear to demonstrate the vulnerable and conditional hospitality that some refugees experienced.

Two participants described antisocial behaviour from other migrants living within shared accommodation, particularly relating to noise nuisance within the property.

> ‘In asylum accommodation you've got quite a lot of people sharing one house… The kind of more like lower level antisocial behaviour stuff tends to be from stuff that's you know happening within houses as well. Like even like people just like being on the phone all night or playing music late at night and then the other people in the house not being able to sleep’ (CJ, VCS Worker)

As CJ alludes to, many people living within one building, which is common for temporary accommodation, can lead to issues of noise nuisance, adjustments to different routines and issues of communication. With noise in particular, people in shared accommodation may respond to the same or similar levels or types of noise differently (Lewis, 2020). For participants, who may be in temporary accommodation with other people that do not share a common language, it can be difficult to negotiate agreed standards of behaviour and levels of noise.

Antisocial behaviour from service providers and professionals

A final, significant theme related to experiences of antisocial behaviour was antisocial behaviour from service providers and professionals. This could be seen as a type of structural violence (see Flint, 2018), where migrants were excluded from services they were entitled to and required from, for example, Job Centre Plus. Participants felt there was some ‘rudeness’ or abruptness from staff when dealing with their cases.

> ‘I have some not good situations in Job Centre Plus because I was trying to explain all my (circumstances). Maybe at the time, I just thought they were a little bit rude but I was advised to do what I need to do or I should not come back’ (Animo)

Paul also provided an example of where an advisor at Job Centre Plus refused to provide the bus passes he and his partner were entitled to, stating:

> ‘It’s your problem. You’re from Ukraine, you can go back home. The manager said this. He said you can go back home if you don’t like. My girlfriend started crying, because we were there together’ (Paul)

When a different manager was called, Paul and his partner were given the bus passes, however, they still experienced issues at Job Centre Plus with staff laughing at them and making them feel uncomfortable. Whilst the issue of the bus pass was resolved, how Paul and his partner were treated remained unresolved.

Participants gave numerous examples of people working across various services treating them differently to other (white) people in the area and being rude. Participants reported people working in shops following them, apparently believing they were going to steal products, shouting at them, or using rude language. As Chun described:

> 'Shopkeepers shouting. Shopkeepers behaving like you don't speak English, like you're an idiot or something' (Chun)

Zarak described two people working at a pharmacy whilst he was trying to collect a prescription for his wife who was ill, saying:

> (Staff at the pharmacy said:) 'They are all not working, these types of people, nowadays there are too many of them' (Zarak)

Zarak believed the staff were referring to him and his family, suggesting refugees were not welcome. Yuet gave the example of taking a phone call at the entrance to a college building, and the security guard telling her to leave by saying, 'Get off'.

> 'He shouldn't, you know, say, "Get off". He didn't even tell me, he just shouted' (Yuet)

Whilst Yuet understood that she could have been seen to be partially obstructing the entrance to the building and therefore could be asked to move, she felt the way she was told to move was overly aggressive. She felt she was treated more aggressively because the security guard knew she was a migrant. Additionally, examples were also given of police officers treating participants in ways that were described as antisocial. Some of these examples came from different countries which impacted how they viewed police forces in general.

> 'One of them (police officers, not UK), they try to hit my wife and my children, and then my children, they was very young, very small. They were five and six years old. Yeah. For that, we always have an afraid from the police' (Nassar)

Whilst the example from Nassar was about experiences from another European country, this increased his feelings of fear and mistrust of police in the UK. Nevertheless, examples were also given of poor treatment and antisocial behaviour from the police in Yorkshire and Humber.

> 'He's regularly, regularly encountered real harassment from the police' (Adriana, Counsellor)

Adriana developed her point above by describing an occasion when the son of a man she was supporting had gone missing. The father reported the incident to the police, although the son later returned home of his own accord. In the morning, the police came to the property and asked to enter. The father asked for them to wait whilst his wife put her headscarf on, however, the police forced entry, causing distress to the family.

> 'They were really upset because this man had come in and saw the mother without her headscarf on. And then the police tried to wrestle these kids to the floor and then more police officers came. I've seen, because he had these cameras, it's all on film. And the police behaviour, there was like seven or eight of them… they handled it so badly' (Adriana, Counsellor)

These examples, particularly those from welfare services or the criminal justice system, appear to demonstrate how antisocial behaviour, typically seen as something that welfare providers and the criminal justice system will respond to (Brown, 2013), can be re-enacted by the system put in place to prevent it. Whilst previous reports on both policing (Casey, 2023) and welfare provision (Institute of Race Relations, 2023; Kiely and Swirak, 2022) have highlighted examples of racist practice, previous research has not explored how this is experienced within the area of antisocial behaviour.

Reporting or responding to antisocial behaviour

To gain a more rounded understanding of how antisocial behaviour was experienced by participants, it was important to understand how (or if) they responded to this behaviour, either through formally reporting the incident(s) or other methods of responding. This section will explore the barriers to reporting as well as how participants who did report antisocial behaviour experienced this process. Finally, other methods of responding to antisocial behaviour (either instead of, or as well as, reporting), will be discussed.

<u>'There's no point taking this further': barriers to reporting</u>

Participants reported numerous barriers to reporting antisocial behaviour, including language barriers, lack of understanding of the process, belief nothing will be done, negative perceptions or experiences of the police, fear of repercussion and more personal barriers such as feeling overwhelmed with other issues, a wish to appear grateful or to keep to themselves. These will all be discussed in this section.

> ‘A language barrier and a lack of understanding of the systems. Not knowing what needs to be shared and why’ (Kavita, Local Authority Migration Worker)

The majority of participants raised language barriers and being unsure of the processes as clear barriers to reporting antisocial behaviour. This could be that they did not know whether it was appropriate to report, as Madiba (below) suggests.

> ‘If you are like an asylum seeker and you know that you don’t need to have problems and you don’t even want to complain. Because of the language barriers and you don’t know your rights exactly as you are new (in the country). All those things just make you feel bad, but you say it is okay, because you don’t exactly what to do. But I know exactly this is not normal for someone to act like this’ (Madiba)

Whilst some participants mentioned receiving leaflets about when to call the police and some thought it might be appropriate to call Migrant Help, a government sub-contracted organisation that provides phone support to people in the asylum system which some participants had knowledge and experience of using. However, this was not seen to be a simple process and required certain knowledge to navigate the process effectively.

> ‘People feel frustrated because they don't know how they can change the situation, the steps they need to take in order to get

> Migrant Help to help them. Migrant Help will help them, but only if they go through the right channel' (Hayley, Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support Worker)

A number of participants felt that if the issues they had experienced happened after they had been in the country for longer, they might have been more inclined to report, reflecting that they had since learnt more about what was acceptable behaviour in the community and where they could report antisocial behaviour to, including, for example, Migrant Help, housing providers and the police. Nevertheless, participants who had been in the country long enough to know who they could report to, did not always report antisocial behaviour. For example, nine participants felt that a key barrier to reporting antisocial behaviour was the belief nothing would be done, or that antisocial behaviour could be made worse, particularly for those who had experienced poor treatment from the police. Some felt that one-off incidents were not worth reporting, or that they did not have enough information about the perpetrator to report it, for example, if they perpetrator was a stranger.

> 'I didn't do that (report it) because it was just a first time incident, so maybe too- maybe if it's something that repeats itself several times, maybe twice then it's something that needs serious attention' (Adaku).

Similarly, even when there were incidents that occurred multiple times, participants believed some forms of antisocial behaviour were not serious enough to result in action, even if they did report it.

> 'I know the police could come in and say it is an offence that has been done, which needs to be taken action to. If nobody was harmed, I was not harmed, the police would say nobody was harmed so there's no point of taking this further' (Maria).

As Maria suggests, some felt that unless there was physical violence, it was not worth reporting to the police. Others felt that, due to immigration status such as asylum seeker or refugee, authorities would not believe them or respond to them. As Adriana (Counsellor) stated:

> 'An asylum seeker young man just gets beat up and it's like nobody shows up. Nobody cares. And they don't get justice.'

Negative perceptions of the police (as well as negative experiences of reporting) contributed to participant decisions not to report. The police, as well

as the Home Office more generally, were reported to be feared by many migrants. As multiple stakeholders suggested:

> ‘For the most part people are wary of the police, whether that's to do with their experiences whilst being in this country or from previous experiences in other countries.’ (CJ, VCS Worker).

> ‘A lot of them don't feel confident in reporting it too, to the police, for example, because of bad experiences with police throughout their journey to the UK and some of them bad experiences with the police while they've been in the UK.’ (Louis, Local Authority Unaccompanied Children’s Support Worker)

Specific examples of how police responded to reports of antisocial behaviour will be discussed below in ‘Experiences of reporting antisocial behaviour’, however, it was clear from interviews that these negative perceptions of the police were sometimes related to experiences of reporting in Yorkshire and Humber, but more often they were related to experiences of police in their home country, other European countries whilst travelling to the UK or from police at UK borders. A fear of authority was common in people seeking asylum who were concerned that, if they approached the police, they would draw attention to themselves.

> ‘You know, when you are an asylum seeker, you really avoid issues. There’s some things you try not (to report) because in one way or another you don’t want to get involved in (with) the authorities. There’re some things we suffer in silence because we want to be out of trouble’ (Lea)

Lea’s story suggested that fear of authorities and, in particular, the police, led to a generalised fear of repercussions should people seeking asylum report antisocial behaviour or more serious crimes. Alongside fear of authorities, there was a fear of repercussions from perpetrators of antisocial behaviour, linked, in part, to the belief that authorities would not protect them should they raise a complaint. The combination of insecure migration status, fear of authorities and general feeling of insecurity combined to make it unlikely that some migrants, particularly those seeking asylum, would report antisocial behaviour. This could lead to a continuation of the behaviour, a targeting of asylum seekers (which, as discussed above, some participants experienced) or a lack of support offered to these victims of antisocial behaviour. One participant reflected positively on an information session the local police force held for people seeking asylum.

> ‘They did a session to explain that you can call us, you can come to the police station to report if you see something bad or if you are not happy about something call the police. But for many people, even on that day when they came to explain, many people did not attend, they were afraid to meet the police’ (Madiba)

Whilst not all the invited people came to the session with the police, this is arguably an example of good practice where the police attempted to alleviate the fears of people seeking asylum and support them to report crime and antisocial behaviour.

Finally, participants reported what they viewed as personal reasons for not reporting their experiences of antisocial behaviour. Stakeholders and participants alike recognised that being in a new country meant that people often had a lot of issues to manage, including finances, housing, health, immigration status and more. Reporting antisocial behaviour was simply too overwhelming for them.

> ‘In my mind, I thought it's too much for me right now. I have already too much in my mind going on so many problems and situations in my life. So I didn't go for the report’ (Léonie)

Some participants raised the concept of gratitude as a barrier to reporting antisocial behaviour, either that authorities feel people who have moved to the country should show gratitude and accept what is offered to them or, as Yuet (below) described, a wish to view the country in the most positive light led to her dismissing ‘the bad things’.

> ‘I feel grateful, I feel thankful and I think this country and the people give us the chance, and I left Hong Kong, I don’t want to mess up and learn the bad things’ (Yuet)

This belief that the UK ‘should be better than what you’ve had’ (Adriana, Counsellor) meant that people felt they could not report antisocial behaviour or that reporting experiences of antisocial behaviour could demonstrate a lack of gratitude. Other participants reported a wish to keep to themselves or ‘mind my business’ (Adaku) which prevented them reporting antisocial behaviour, rather than a specific wish to demonstrate gratitude. Kalma (below) lived with his brother in privately rented accommodation and said he did not want to ‘interfere’, despite experiencing noise nuisance over an extended period of time from a neighbour.

> ‘I'm staying with my elder brother. So I really don't want to interfere in all this.’ (Kalma).

This wish to avoid conflict or not interfere meant issues could continue for a long period of time. Ganna avoided reporting early issues of antisocial behaviour from her neighbour because she is ‘not a conflict person’, however, this led to a continuation, and ultimately to escalation, of issues with her neighbour before Ganna reported the problems to her housing provider. As Hayley (below) describes, if people do not report antisocial behaviour, or delay reporting antisocial behaviour, this could lead to it not being responded to at all.

> ‘If someone had made more of a fuss about it at initially then maybe it would have been reported sooner… I think if it impacts an individual more severely the same behaviour will get more attention. Whereas if someone just brushes it off it will get less attention… Someone who shouts louder gets attention’ (Hayley, Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support Worker)

Overall, all participants reported a combination of barriers to reporting antisocial behaviour to authorities, even if they did later report issues to the police, their housing provider, or their local authority. This could lead to a delay in responding, or their reports not being taken as seriously than if they had reported them straight away. Where antisocial behaviour was not reported at all, the behaviour remains unchecked by authorities and could lead to continued experiences of antisocial behaviour.

Experiences of reporting

Whilst all participants mentioned barriers to reporting antisocial behaviour formally, some nevertheless did report the issues they had experienced or were experiencing to authorities. These including local authorities and other social housing providers, the police, Migrant Help and, for those living in hotels, hotel security staff. Some participants reflected on generally positive experiences of reporting antisocial behaviour or crime. For example, Sherlock, who had his bicycle stolen twice, which he viewed as antisocial behaviour, said the first time this happened, he did not report it to the police due to a belief that nothing would be done. When this happened again, he reported it to the police, who were able to recover his bicycle.

> ‘Before this incident I didn’t have any expectations but when I reported it they were quite nice, the woman was asking me about my emotional state which was quite strange, but good’ (Sherlock)

As a result, Sherlock felt he was more likely to report to the police again in the future if he needed to. Another participant, who had counterfeit bank notes posted through his door, also felt the police had responded well.

> 'I said to the policeman I am very, very lucky. The policeman said yes, if you took this money to the bank or supermarket or anywhere it would definitely put you in (trouble), which is definitely not what you want to do… They advised me very well, be careful, it's possible who did this to you will come back' (Famous)

Famous reported the response from the police to be quick and reflected positively on the experience of reporting to them, despite no further action being taken.

Ganna also reported positive experiences. She reported longstanding antisocial behaviour from a neighbour, involving moving bins in front of her window, throwing items through her window and into her flat, throwing stones at her window and shouting at her from outside the flat. She reported these issues to both her social landlord and the police, both of whom she felt were supportive. Whilst Ganna eventually asked to move from the property because of the antisocial behaviour she experienced, she felt that both services had responded well.

> 'Ganna said that she's really happy with the way social (public) services work in this country, so she doesn't even know how to improve, what things need to be done to improve it, because she's really pleased with the way police responded. That they're very sympathetic, that they provided emotional support, that also her (landlord) was extremely supportive. So, that she responded to her emails, that she was trying her best to deal with this neighbour' (Ganna, interview using translator)

It is interesting here that whilst the antisocial behaviour continued over a relatively long period of time, Ganna still felt that she was supported and responded to well by both her landlord and the police, suggesting that whilst the behaviour was not stopped, being treated with kindness and respect, and receiving clear and quick communication are seen as good responses to antisocial behaviour victimisation.

For others, however, experiences of reporting were less positive. Lea described trying to report antisocial behaviour to her housing manager at the housing provider, however, she said:

> ‘We wanted to report it to the house manager but she didn’t pick up.’ (Lea)

A lack of response, or very slow responses were the main issues reported by participants in interviews. This was especially the case for reports made to the police.

> ‘Whenever they've kind of raised it with the police and stuff, it's always been just like, oh just record it, write it down and you can't really do anything about it sort of thing’ (CJ, VCS Worker).

Stakeholders CJ (quoted above), Adriana (Counsellor), and Juluis (VCS Worker) believed the reason for slow responses from the police was largely down to racism, with the police choosing not to take reports from migrants seriously. The slow response led to people not following up their reports or choosing not to report further issues of antisocial behaviour as they believed nothing would be done.

> ‘We filed an official complaint and you know, they were still investigating… You know, we've gone tired of (reporting it), or gone exhausted’ (Kalma)

Adriana (Counsellor) described an incident of a migrant being physically assaulted, resulting in lasting brain injuries, which she argued didn’t see justice due to a lack of police attention and interest. She also described the police as deliberately obstructive when she tried to seek justice for the people she was supporting.

> ‘You know, you ask for records… they might just ignore it, not give you anything or something that's like severely redacted and summary, and which doesn't give you anything. It's not like, oh, we're really sorry this has happened. Can you meet with us? Let's talk about it. No’ (Adriana, Counsellor).

It can be recognised that the police and other services may be under additional financial strain (Caveney et al., 2020), with competing pressures which impact their ability to provide a quick service following reports of antisocial behaviour. Nevertheless, recognition should also be given to the impact that slow responses, or no response at all, have on people, especially those who have migrated to the UK, experiencing antisocial behaviour, many of whom were already experiencing multiple barriers to reporting this behaviour to the police and others. The lack of (quick) response meant that people would not feel

heard, listened to or taken seriously, and could contribute to them not reporting antisocial behaviour in the future. With some of the behaviours reported (in the section above) including relatively serious crimes such as assault and racially targeted abuse, this could mean these behaviours are not responded to by the criminal justice system in a meaningful way, potentially leading to a continuation of those behaviours and a lack of support.

'Don't give them the satisfaction': other responses to antisocial behaviour

Some participants, either instead of, or as well as formally reporting antisocial behaviour, had explored or recommended different responses to antisocial behaviour. For some, a lack of response was their way of managing these issues.

> Sometimes when someone is approaching, you can predict what they're going to say before they even say it from their behaviour, their look, their face. Sometimes it's very obvious what is going to come out of them. So I keep moving on, by not interfering with them, you don't give them the satisfaction of provoking you (Ashor).

For these participants, ignoring the behaviour felt like the most appropriate response at the time, usually due to the combination of barriers discussed above. As Maria stated:

> 'Sometimes you just have to swallow it' (Maria)

Some would also speak to other migrants to share their experiences or to help them decide how to respond. For example, Sherlock described racist abuse he had experienced while shopping, including racialised insults and being told to 'Go back to Africa.' He said:

> 'I did talk about it with my friend but we just laughed about it. I mean, it's a normal thing that happens where I come from. You know, you can go to the market and you get these kinds of scenes' (Sherlock)

Here, something that at the time Sherlock had found distressing, was reconstructed as an amusing anecdote to his friend and, as this was seen as behaviour that he might have experienced in his home country, was not something that would he would think to report. As well as offering a way to take humour from an unpleasant situation, friends were also able to offer advice on

whether or not to report an incident, or, as Nathalie reflects, offered a safe space for her to feel valued.

> 'I respond to antisocial behaviour by gravitating towards people who can understand what you feel and uphold you and value you and yeah, that's very, very important. Now I'm no longer forcing myself to be in the company of people where I'm not feeling comfortable' (Nathalie)

Finally, participants also spoke of cameras as a key response to experiencing antisocial behaviour. Some used cameras to prevent antisocial behaviour or to prevent an escalation of antisocial behaviour, for example, by having visible CCTV outside the property or even, in two examples given, inside their house.

> 'He had installed cameras in his house. He's got four cameras recording what goes on' (Adriana, Counsellor)

Video recordings were also seen as key way to gather evidence of antisocial behaviour.

> 'My wife, she tried to make a video. Then she can send it to the housing manager because, you know, sometimes we want, like, evidence that can show that our manager what's happened with us because sometimes when you talk, some people, they don't believe you. They want like, a proof' (Nassar)

That being said, participants reflected on the difficulties of recording something that happened as a 'quick' or 'one-off' incident, or recording behaviours conducted by children, who they had been told were largely inappropriate to record.

Overall, participants did not necessarily feel that other responses to antisocial behaviour outside of formal reporting did much to prevent further antisocial behaviour, however, taking these steps could help them to feel more comfortable or feel like they had more agency in response to the issues they were experiencing. It is the impact of antisocial behaviour on victims that this report will now discuss.

Impact of antisocial behaviour

The impact of antisocial behaviour on victims has been widely reported in existing literature to be significant and longstanding (Home Office, 2023; Murray et al., 2024; Newlove, 2019). As many people who have migrated have

experienced trauma before moving to Yorkshire and Humber, it could be expected that antisocial behaviour could cause further and additional trauma.

The section explores the findings related to the impact of antisocial behaviour, which broadly fell into impacts on health and wellbeing, the impact on family, particularly children, and an impact on migrant behaviours.

Madiba: a case study of racist and status-targeted behaviour

> 'I think sometimes it is clear that you experience something because you are a migrant.' (Madiba)

As the findings suggest, for many migrants who took part in this research, both their immigration status and their ethnicity are factors that expose them to being targeted in the community by anti-social behaviour.

Madiba is among those who expanded on this during his interview. Now in his mid-twenties, he came to the UK to seek asylum more than a year before the interview took place. When we met him, he was living in asylum accommodation in Wakefield. He first shared his understanding of antisocial behaviour before giving examples of how he has experienced it and the impact it has had on his life since arriving in the UK.

When he explained what anti-social behaviour means to him, he highlighted two things: 'Not respecting other people and not respecting the rules of the community.' He then described feeling exposed to such behaviour because of his immigration status. For him, negative media coverage is a major factor contributing to fear and social distance from migrants within the community. He said:

> 'People are very careful about asylum seekers because they are hearing things on television that are not true. And this makes them very careful. So, we don't have lots of interaction with people…'

He also reported that two weeks before the interview, a group of people protested outside his accommodation. Some of them filmed and photographed residents. He described feeling distressed and unwelcome:

> 'It made me feel that I am not welcome, that I don't have the right to stay in this country. I am not quite sure why they came to film us like this. We did not have information, and no one explained to us what was going on. So, that is quite (…). It is like we did something bad, but we did not do anything bad. Most of us are seeking protection because we come from countries that are at war. I think it is not good to treat people like this.'

Madiba also described other incidents, including a driver who swerved towards him in a way that felt threatening, and occasions where young people shouted at him and his friends in the street. He believed the behaviour was racially motivated:

He felt the driver 'did this just to scare (him)and make (him) feel uncomfortable,' and also because he is Black.

When we asked whether he reported any of these incidents, he explained that his past experiences with policing in his home country — combined with language barriers and insecurity linked to his asylum status — make reporting feel risky and difficult:

> 'If you are an asylum seeker and you know that you don't need to have problems, you don't even want to complain. Because of the language barriers, and you don't know your rights exactly as you are new in the country. All those things just make you feel bad, but you say it is okay…'

Madiba said he was particularly shocked when he was bullied by young people who he believed also came from migrant backgrounds: 'Those young people see that everyone behaves like this, and they now feel it's normal.'

He contrasted these experiences with the positive expectations he had before coming to the UK: 'It is something that you would not expect to see in a country like this, when you hear all those good attitudes that they promote like democracy and liberty.' However, he also emphasised that hostility does not represent everyone in the UK:

> 'Once again, I don't say that all people are bad, but some people are very bad. There are many other people who are very kind (…) But I think there is still a lot to do for people to change their mind.'

At the end of the interview, Madiba reflected on why taking part in this research mattered to him. He explained that these experiences are common but rarely talked about. He said: 'These things happen, but we do not talk about them,' and taking part in the research gave him a way to make his voice heard.

Impact on health and wellbeing

The impacts of antisocial behaviour on migrant health and wellbeing were significant and wide ranging, from initial reactions and feelings to long term impacts on health, emotional wellbeing and feelings of safety and security.

Many participants felt unhappiness or sadness that they had experienced antisocial behaviour in a society they hoped would welcome them. Belinha, discussing her son, said:

'I just realised that my son was not happy… he was still sad. He did not want to tell me [about ASB he had experienced] to make me sad' For some, this sadness also came with feelings of anger, especially when they recognised the behaviour as targeted at them.

> 'I think that I know what I'm talking about when I see a racist situation. I feel sad, I feel angry and I feel bad. I did my thesis in Liverpool in 1999 and I feel that things haven't improved. It has become worse actually' (Chun)

This anger often developed into feelings of frustration, especially where behaviour continued or it appeared that nothing would be done by services.

> '(Migrants may feel) anger that it's happening and that they feel like they can't do anything about it, especially if it's young people that are doing the anti social behaviour so they feel like well, they're children and so they feel a bit like powerless and I think that does make people feel angry' (Freya, Local Authority Migrant Project Officer)

As alluded to by Freya, humiliation was also experienced by migrants, particularly when the antisocial behaviour came from young people or children.

> 'One Iranian man who, you know, he'd been a teacher in his country. And so his dignity was important. And he, you know, somebody came to the door saying they were delivering pizza or something and then they just opened the door and beat him up. He came badly bruised, you know, bloodied. And he was so humiliated. Because he didn't have the language to say anything, he felt completely powerless, whereas before he was a man with authority' (Adriana, Counsellor)

These feelings of humiliation, frustration, anger, and unhappiness could have long term impacts on migrant health and overall wellbeing. Existing research

has suggested that these feelings can impact mental health and reduce feelings of life satisfaction (Forbes et al., 2015). Antisocial behaviour also impacted how welcome participants felt in Yorkshire and Humber and in England more broadly.

> 'I felt in the first place like you don't belong here. People take advantage of you, they overstep the boundaries and you also feel like the lack of privileges is difficult to deal with' (Nathalie)

This added to a general disillusionment in society, with England not being what migrants expected it to be from their prior understanding of what an 'English person' or 'English town' was like.

> 'Well, I left my country because of war. I never thought about leaving it, honestly. I came to Britain because I speak a bit of English so I decided this would be the place. And I considered it, before coming here, a very safe place, a very respectable place I would say. But when I came here, I found it is not that much' (Raisa)

Whilst feeling unwelcome had a clear impact on migrants' emotional wellbeing on its own, it was added to broader feelings of being unsafe in their local communities or in their homes.

> '(The antisocial behaviour) makes me very distressing (distressed) and, you know, feeling very unsafe and uncomfortable' (Kalma)

There was a fear that leaving their homes or, for some participants where antisocial behaviour was within the home, even leaving their rooms, could lead to further or intensified antisocial behaviour.

> 'It was not a good incident because I had, because I had trouble getting through it because I had to think of maybe tomorrow what would be there. The other thing could be somebody could just do something which is a little bit worser than yesterday. A lot of thinking and stress' (Adaku)

Feeling unsafe has been found to lead to psychological distress and contrastingly, feeling safe has been linked to mental wellbeing (Allik and Kearns, 2016; Valente and Crescenzi-Lanna, 2022). This suggests that feeling unsafe could have longer term impacts on mental health and wellbeing.

> ‘(Antisocial behaviour had a) really bad impact on my mental health and I'm still scared. I'm still scared when I go to the park and now this day I'm more scared now, you know, by watching these videos and things (of 2024 riots). I'm scared to step out of my house because I have these memories and now this happening to everyone and every town. It's making it worse’ (Léonie)

Participants and stakeholders reported that antisocial behaviour had a significant impact on the mental health of those experiencing it, especially when this continued for a significant length of time. Participants reported increased feelings of anxiety and depression, combined with a fear of future victimisation which impacted how they used their home and their communities.

> ‘Do they even know how much trauma they are causing me?’ (Maria, Refugee, F, Kenya)

There was also evidence of an impact on physical health. For some, this was immediate and came from the antisocial behaviour itself, for example, physical assault leading to broken bones, stitches in a hospital and for one person, severe brain injury. As Adriana (Counsellor) recounted:

> ‘You know, his whole livelihood, his being, you know, his whole future is just being dramatically destroyed’

For others, the long term stress from antisocial behaviour led to issues with sleep, impacting their overall physical health and wellbeing.

> ‘And how we will be sleeping in that house. I will assure you that I would not sleep at night. I would be sleepless for many nights if the situation now is happening in UK, when I was in the flat, I would be sleepless because the worry, the stress, I cannot handle’ (Léonie)

There was some recognition that the impact of antisocial behaviour was worsened by existing circumstances and previous trauma. For example, Nassar explained that loud voices and shouting especially impacted his wife and children, who had experienced kidnap and torture before moving to the UK, meaning they were more afraid than they might otherwise have been and struggled with sleeping.

> ‘If you're in a situation that is already precarious, that is already stressful, and that you're already struggling to sleep and often struggling with depression anxiety. The kind of racism that people face that face and the kind of lack of being able to even feel safe in

> their in their accommodation has a big impact on it, kind of like doubles down all that stuff that's already going on for people' (CJ, VCS Worker)

The cumulative nature of antisocial behaviour and its impact on victims has been previously noted, and specifically, the negative impact on victim's mental health has been recognised as significant and longstanding (Brown, 2013; Murray et al., 2024; Newlove, 2019). For people who have moved to the UK, the impact of antisocial behaviour, combined with precarious living conditions and migration status for many, can further worsen the impact of antisocial behaviour on mental health and wellbeing.

Impact on immediate family

As well as the impact on the individual, participants spoke about the impact of antisocial behaviour on their immediate family, for example, their partners or their children.

> 'My wife was a bit distressed and she was not happy… She doesn't understand English. They may say something different, I wasn't with them a few times, but she say, "They were laughing at me"' (Zarak)

Both Zarak (above) and Paul reflected on how antisocial behaviour had impacted their partners comparatively more than themselves and spoke of how they felt they had to provide more emotional support to their partners to help them to continue to leave the home and access services as required. They also suggested that the lack of confidence or proficiency in English language further isolated them following these experiences. Additionally, participants reflected on the impact of children who had witnessed antisocial behaviour.

> 'It really affects children when they hear someone calling them names or asking them to leave. It just affects them mentally and make them consider really so they think they are unwelcome and unwanted' (Ashor)

The impact of antisocial behaviour on feeling safe and on children's mental health was seen as worse than the impact on adults, especially for migrant children who had already experienced changes to their living circumstances that may have been outside of the family's choice or control. This could also make children feel unsafe to leave the house.

> ‘Their children don't go out, they go to school and things, but they don't go out. They don't want to go to the local shop for the mum because they're scared that something might happen which leaves people isolated’ (Olivia, Local Authority Migrant Project Officer)

The impact on children, their safety and their wellbeing further impacted parents, who reported feeling worried on behalf of their children and, in one instance, reported feeling guilty for moving their children to the country.

> ‘I felt so sorry for my children and my husband, because my husband just tried to offer a better life, take my children to Uni, a better future… So, I was feeling guilty, because I brought my children, and my children did not have to feel this’ (Belinha)

Overall, participants who were parents were especially worried about the impact of antisocial behaviour on their children, particularly on their feelings of being welcome, safe and on their mental health. Previous research has found that feeling unsafe in childhood can lead to psychological distress in adolescence, suggesting experiences of antisocial behaviour could lead to future psychological distress for the children who are victim to it (Valente and Crescenzi-Lanna, 2022).

Impact on behaviour

Some participants reported how victims changed their behaviour following experiences of antisocial behaviour. This was clearly linked to impacts on health and wellbeing (discussed above), with the frustration, stress and upset of antisocial behaviour leading to victims changing their behaviour. Some participants spoke of no longer socialising with non-migrant people after becoming fearful of interactions with others.

> 'Of course, because of those acts, when you meet someone, you already say maybe this guy is one of those people who do not like us, and you hesitate, it does not allow you to integrate easily, to socialise, it keeps you away. You will all time want to stay with people who are from other countries, who are immigrants like you' (Madiba)

Whilst Madiba felt this impacted his ability to engage with others and trust others, Nathalie felt avoiding interactions with people who were not migrants was a way of protecting herself.

> 'I have to protect myself. Everyone can make these mistakes but still I have to protect my energy, my mental health' (Nathalie)

This may have an impact on wider community relationships if people who have moved to the UK find it difficult to trust or build relationships with British nationals and may lead to more segregated communities moving forwards.

For others, a change in behaviour was not a chosen response to antisocial behaviour and instead, appeared to be a response from stress and upset that impacted their ability to manage their daily lives.

> 'A woman with one daughter, so there were lots of vulnerability issues and I saw her in the beginning of the programme. When she arrived from Ukraine, she was very confident, able to do things and that changed. That changed to not being confident and not being able to cope with day-to-day life when she was subjected to ASB. So, I've seen that change with my own eyes' (Kavita, Local Authority Migration Worker)

With many participants reporting being overwhelmed with other competing pressures at the time of experiencing antisocial behaviour, it is perhaps not a surprise that some may become less able to manage their needs when further pressure is placed on them.

Some participants and stakeholders also reported that victims felt they had to move property due to antisocial behaviour they had experienced or were still experiencing as they viewed this as the only way to prevent further antisocial behaviour.

> 'One of them (unaccompanied child) was really, really badly affected by antisocial behaviour against him in such a fact that he had to leave the area and relocate. He ended up going down to London and even now… he still maintains that he would like to live in the area, but he knows that because of the antisocial behaviour that he had to put up with that he couldn't come back' (Louis, Local Authority Unaccompanied Children Support Worker)

Whilst many participants wanted to move, this came with additional challenges, including cost, finding an appropriate place to move to and, for many, waiting for social housing to become available, which could take a long time. That being said, all the participants in the study who reported wanting to move had moved away from the accommodation where they had experienced the antisocial behaviour.

> 'It's just the reason that she moved to the other place so she could not stand living there anymore' (Ganna, interview using translator)

Overall, these findings suggest victims of antisocial behaviour may be influenced to change their behaviour in ways that may further impact them, whether related to socialising and feeling comfortable with the local community, a decreased ability to manage their day to day lives or financially with a change to their property. These all come with added pressures on mental health and suggest that people are made to change or adapt their behaviour and living circumstances to prevent further antisocial behaviour rather than the burden on the perpetrator to change their behaviour. Research into the impact of antisocial behaviour interventions on perpetrators suggests that often, even where there are interventions, perpetrators may not change their behaviour in a way that prevents further antisocial behaviour (Cameron, 2024).

Moving forward: prevention and responses

As well as reflecting on how they had experienced antisocial behaviour and its responses, participants also considered the ways they felt that antisocial behaviour could be prevented or better responded to in the future. These suggestions broadly fell into two themes, including different responses from individuals and changes to responses from communities or services.

It's personal: adjusting own responses

Participants spoke of how they, or others, could better prevent or respond to antisocial behaviour. Whilst it is perhaps natural that participants thought of what they could do differently, it is important to assert here that this was not about blaming themselves for the antisocial behaviour they experienced, but a way that participants felt they could have some control over the situation. For example, two participants spoke about adjusting to the local rules or acting unthreatening to make British people more comfortable.

> 'My advice is, first of all we need to be nice. Smile like we like people. People can feel from your action are you nice or are you a threat. We can't always think people are horrible, racist. Then they will have a different attitude' (Yuet)

Similarly, participants and stakeholders both spoke of building friendships across communities, being kind and avoiding confrontation wherever possible, arguing this would help to build trust between different communities.

> 'I would say there are people actually who are racist, but they won't be as racist as they are usually when they have friends who are of ethnic minorities because I think after becoming friends, let's say we become friends, you will no longer see me as someone from Asia, and I will no longer see you as a Black man, I will see you a friend' (Chun)

These were seen as efforts to prevent antisocial behaviour, although it could be seen to be putting the burden on migrant populations to bridge the gap when, arguably, putting more pressure on people to prevent their own victimisation is unreasonable.

In relation to responding to antisocial behaviour when it does happen, participants and stakeholders stressed the need to report more consistently.

> 'Importantly here, anything that happens, try report it to the police because the police are here to protect lives and property, definitely. And from the police, let them ask and tell them. Don't take the law into your own hands' (Famous)

Whilst participants suggested local authorities, housing providers or charities as places that could be contacted to report antisocial behaviour, it was largely the police that were seen as the most appropriate place to report. That being said, it

was recognised that unless people were taken seriously when they made this report, reporting on its own was unlikely to result in any action.

> 'Everybody, all the residents of the Leeds should be encouraged to report the antisocial behaviour and the police must keep a log. And no matter how small that incident is' (Kavita, Local Authority Migration Worker)

It was believed that more reporting could lead to more attention being paid to antisocial behaviour in the local area and lead to better responses overall.

Improved responses from communities and services

Alongside trying to build friendships amongst different communities and encouraging reporting, there were numerous examples of how the wider community and services could better respond to antisocial behaviour. Participants spoke of the need to call out antisocial behaviour when it was witnessed and to intervene where possible.

> 'Maybe do not ignore- (do not) try to stay to the side if you see something bad. Just try to help and other people try to do something good for you and with that, you will do something good for other people' (Paul)

This was seen as a way of showing perpetrators that their behaviour was not accepted in the local area and helped people to feel they were not on their own when experiencing antisocial behaviour. This was seen as particularly important when the antisocial behaviour was coming from young people or children, where many felt it was not always appropriate to include the police in these scenarios. Emphasis was placed on the parents of young people and children to prevent them from engaging in antisocial behaviour.

> 'ASB (antisocial behaviour) should be everybody's responsibility and also the parents. The parents are the main educators. And they need to play a vital role in terms of protecting their own children from any engagement in any crime' (Kavita, Local Authority Migration Worker)

Nevertheless, it was accepted that some antisocial behaviour would need the involvement of other services to respond, particularly the police and housing providers. The ability to anonymously report antisocial behaviour was suggested as a way to help encourage reporting amongst asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants. Alternately, being able to report antisocial behaviour to

a charity who would then report it to the police was seen as a positive way to encourage reporting, especially amongst participants who were less confident with English language speaking.

> ‘Maybe if we can report to the charity but we don’t want to get involved with police or these issues’ (Lea)

Once reported, participants stated the need to keep people informed of what was happening. For example, Ashor, when reflecting on their experience of reporting antisocial behaviour, said:

> ‘I don't get informed of what's happening later in the process, but I assume the authority to do their job and follow up with the report’ (Ashor)

With a key barrier to reporting antisocial behaviour being the belief that nothing will be done, keeping victims informed of the process and next steps would be one method of letting them believe they are being taken seriously.

Finally, participants and stakeholders reported the need for antisocial behaviour, or at least racially motivated antisocial behaviour, to be taken more seriously by authorities.

> ‘Like in terms of the Council, I'm not aware of what happens if someone's making a complaint about antisocial behaviour and the perpetrators are in council houses because I think some of the younger people that are being antisocial, if they thought like right, you know what, if I keep doing this, my mum's gonna lose her council house. I feel like that kind of would deter a little bit of it’ (Freya, Local Authority Migrant Project Officer)

Whilst it is already possible that social housing tenants may lose their homes as a result of antisocial behaviour, not much of the antisocial behaviour experienced was reportedly from those living within social housing properties.

Some participants felt that authorities simply attending after a report of antisocial behaviour and visibly taking antisocial behaviour seriously could be enough.

> ‘To prevent the antisocial behaviour around the community… when somebody calls for help and try to attend as soon as possible, because that somebody is in serious need of help’ (Adaku)

There was recognition that community services, especially services such as local authorities, welfare providers and the police were underfunded and struggling with competing pressures. Investment in communities, services and anti-poverty measures were seen as a broader method of responding to antisocial behaviour effectively.

> ‘Policies need to be thought through, you know, the housing is just a big disgrace as far as I can tell. It's like because of the lack of regulation… I think there's been certain policy failures which has led to the kind of increase in discontent. And then if people are bored and, you know, they don't see any hope, it's easy to start blaming somebody else’ (Adriana, Counsellor)

This ‘discontent’ in society was seen as a cause of antisocial behaviour, particularly antisocial behaviour targeted at migrants who may be seen as a convenient scapegoat for a host of societal problems (Tufail et al., 2023). As Belinha said:

> ‘I wish we should have more police around; more work in the community, more work in the school. It would be good if the Council can provide funding to schools for the children, so they don’t have free time on the streets. Because some areas are poor and parents can’t afford to have their children doing activities like swimming… It would be amazing if the community, the council, everyone can work together to make a bright future’ (Belinha)

Antisocial behaviour and social connections: A reflection from the community researcher who conducted interviews with migrants' participants

The conversations I had with people with migrant status who took part in this research made me think more about the work still needed to build a more cohesive society—one where everyone feels accepted and able to contribute to the wellbeing of the whole community.

These findings show a clear link between anti-social behaviour and the barriers migrants face when trying to play their part into building social connections. Although the findings are drawn from the local context of this research; they also reflect the wider UK picture.

For example, the study reports that 'some participants spoke of no longer socialising with non-migrant people after becoming fearful of interactions with others' (p.43). This echoes what we found in an earlier research project on social isolation and connections in Yorkshire and Humber, conducted by Migration Yorkshire with the IPPR (Mort et al., 2022).

That project explored ways to promote social cohesion among different community groups and the barriers preventing this. While participants did not use the term 'anti-social behaviour,' many described experiences of racism, discrimination, and hate crime that affected both migrants and ethnic minority residents (Mort et al., 2022, p.25). As that study noted, 'the fear of being attacked, or of being verbally abused, has an isolating effect as people feel unwelcome and unable to engage in activities and events locally' (Mort et al., 2022, p.25).

Taken together, these findings suggest that anti-social behaviour is one of the factors that undermines social cohesion and slows the integration of migrants. Feeling connected to others in the community is widely recognised as essential for integration. Yet, when people experience hostility or fear, those connections are harder to build.

As a community researcher, I often hear when interacting with people who are new in the country, how they sometimes feel disappointed for being ignored or rejected when they try to connect with people from the host communities. The experiences of antisocial behaviour of the participants to this research, echo this.

Reflecting on this is timely. In fact, too often, political and media debates frame social integration as a duty that migrants must fulfil, rather than as a mutual process that most newcomers actively hope for when they arrive. In every piece

of fieldwork I have done, migrants themselves speak about wanting to connect, belong, and contribute, but they face unexpected barriers.

While it needs to be acknowledged that blaming migrants for the failure of our communities to be united is unfair, this pilot study reveals that other factors that prevent social cohesion are often overlooked. Anti-social behaviours experienced by migrants is one of them. Hence, this report shows the need for local authorities and government to take anti-social behaviour seriously as part of their integration strategy. Preventing hostility and promoting safety with practical measures should not be seen as an 'add-on'; it is central to helping migrants and long-standing residents alike feel part of one community.

Conclusion

This research has explored the extent and impact of antisocial behaviour on migrants, refugees and asylum seekers living in the Yorkshire and Humber region, as well as considering how these experiences can help us to inform future research, policy, and practice. The three key findings of this research suggest that, firstly, participants in this research from a migrant background had experienced a range of antisocial behaviour, much of which (although not all) they felt to be targeted at them rather than as general antisocial behaviour witnessed in their local area, for example, graffiti, fly tipping or noise nuisance. Instead, participants reported racially motivated abuse and nuisance, including properties known to house asylum seekers and refugees targeted with eggs and bricks thrown at the properties as well as individual harassment, verbal abuse, and physical violence.

Second, in relation to intersecting characteristics, female participants spoke of an added layer of discrimination, with their experiences of antisocial behaviour structured by ethnicity, migration status, and gender. These types of antisocial behaviour were especially pervasive and impactful, and demonstrated the challenges for many participants in settling into communities and feeling safe. Other common forms of antisocial behaviour came from children and young people, often in groups, who might bully children or shout abuse at adults or children that appeared to be racially motivated. Behaviour from young people was seen as especially disempowering for participants who felt little could be done to challenge this behaviour directly.

Third, participants reported antisocial behaviour from services, including welfare providers, shop assistants or security guards and the police, seemingly motivated by racist or xenophobic attitudes. If antisocial behaviour comes from the services meant to respond to and manage antisocial behaviour, it leaves people with few places to turn to for support and risks impacting negatively on service user willingness to engage with other services in the future.

Whilst antisocial behaviour had been personally experienced by most participants, there were many barriers to reporting these issues to services, including language barriers, lack of information, belief that nothing will be done and feeling overwhelmed with other challenges. Additionally, some felt that reporting antisocial behaviour would suggest they were ungrateful for the chance to live in the country or settle in the community, which prevented them from reporting the behaviour. This suggests that much of the antisocial behaviour experienced is not reported and remains excluded from any data on antisocial behaviour held by police or other services, meaning the antisocial

behaviour experienced by migrant populations remains a largely invisible issue. When antisocial behaviour is reported, participants had mixed experiences. Positive experiences were characterised by quick and clear communication, the feeling of being respected and listened to. Less positive experiences demonstrated a slow or no response from services when antisocial behaviour was reported, or not being taken seriously.

The impact of antisocial behaviour was clear across participants, who reported longstanding impacts on their health and wellbeing, especially related to mental health which continued after the antisocial behaviour had ceased or participants had moved away. The impact on children was seen to be especially severe, making them feel unwelcome and adding to existing trauma some had experienced. Participants also reported impacts on their own behaviours, stating they no longer walked at night, some didn't feel comfortable leaving the house, and building friendships with migrant communities and avoiding contact where possible with White British people. The stories presented show the clear and damaging impact antisocial behaviour can have on asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants and demonstrate the need for more and better support for those experiencing antisocial behaviour.

Voices of those experiencing antisocial behaviour are important when looking for satisfactory remedies. Participants suggested ways for preventing or responding to antisocial behaviour, which included changing their own behaviour and trying to make connections with local communities to prevent antisocial behaviour, combined with more reporting, better responses from services and investment in local communities.

From this research, the following suggestions are proposed:

- Political and community leaders should lead by example to prevent, call out, and respond to racially motivated antisocial behaviour and other crimes.
- Participants valued the opportunity to be listened to about their experiences of antisocial behaviour, and the project received significantly more interest from potential participants than could accommodated within the time and budget constraints. This suggests more research is needed to understand the extent, type, and impact of antisocial behaviour on asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants within and outside of the Yorkshire and Humber region.
- More information on what constitutes antisocial behaviour in this country and how to report it could be offered to migrants in different formats and support offered to those who ask for help to report antisocial behaviour.
- More accessible routes to reporting antisocial behaviour through the police, local authority, refugee and asylum services and charitable services could be opened up, including opportunities for people to report antisocial behaviour in the places and language they feel most comfortable.
- Services should develop processes to log and action reports of antisocial behaviour and to better communicate with victims. Place-specific services should develop mechanisms for sharing data collected in different settings across the area to work together to share information about antisocial behaviour reports in specific localities and develop locally sensitive strategies to reducing antisocial behaviour from children and adults.
- More support could be offered to new arrivals in the country to inform them of how to report antisocial behaviour. For example, Home Office housing providers could be required to provide asylum seekers and refugees they house with a contact for reporting antisocial behaviour.
- More support is needed to prevent longstanding impacts of antisocial behaviour victimisation on victims' health and wellbeing. More specialised support for children experiencing antisocial behaviour could help to mitigate the long-term impact on children's mental health and wellbeing.
- Tailored support could be offered to female asylum seekers, refugees and migrants with recognition that they are more likely to targeted antisocial behaviour due to their ethnicity, migration status and gender. More could be done nationally to call out combined racist and misogynistic behaviours as part of the government strategy to half violence against women and girls.

- More training and accountability is needed in services where people are experiencing antisocial behaviour from service providers.
- More resources are needed to support the voluntary and community sector and other services working towards increased community cohesion and integration, as well as to services responding to reports of antisocial behaviour, to encourage trust and relationship building between communities.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded by the Centre for Applied Social Research within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Leeds Beckett University, and would not be possible without them, Migration Yorkshire, especially Vanja Čelebičić and Pip Tyler, and their partner organisations. Thank you to John Willott at Leeds Beckett for helping to build the connections between Leeds Beckett and Migration Yorkshire. Finally, particular thank you to all the participants who gave up their time to be part of this project, your views and insight is highly valued.

References

Allik, M. and Kearns, A. (2016). 'There goes the fear': feelings of safety at home and in the neighbourhood: the role of personal, social and service factors. *Journal of Community Psychology,* 45 (4), 543 – 563.

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, ch. 38. London: The Stationary Office.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, ch. 12. London: The Stationary Office.

Brown, K. (2015). *Vulnerability & young people: Care and social control in policy and practice*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Brown, K. J. (2013). The developing habitus of the anti-social behaviour practitioner: from expansion in years of plenty to surviving the age of austerity. *Journal of Law and Society,* 40 (3), 375 – 402.

Burney, E. (2005). *Making people behave: anti-social behaviour politics and policy.* Devon: Willan Publishing.

Cairns, P. and Howells, L. (2019). Angry young men: interpersonal formulation of anger to effect change. In J. A. Barry, (Eds). *The Palgrave handbook of male psychology and mental health.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 351 – 368.

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

Cameron, K. (2024). Changing behaviour and/or heightening vulnerability? The impact of antisocial behaviour interventions on alleged perpetrators living within social housing. In B. Sojka, S., Köppe, A. Parma and R. Cefalo (Eds). *Social Policy Review 36.* Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Carr, H. and Cowan, D. (2006). Labelling: constructing definitions of antisocial behaviour? In J. Flint (Eds). *Housing, urban governance and antisocial behaviour.* Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 57-78.

Casey, L. (2023). *An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service*. London: Metropolitan Police.

Caveny, N., Scott, P., Williams, S. and Howe-Walsh, L. (2020). Police reform, austerity and 'cop culture': time to change the record? *Policing and Society,* 30 (10), 1210 – 1225.

Crossley, M. (2023). 'Homes for Ukraine': gendered refugee hosting, differential inclusion and domopolitics in the United Kingdom. *Journal of International*

Women's Studies, 25 (8). (Online). Available at: https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol25/iss8/8

Crow, G. (2021). *Community studies: research methods.* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Daoust, G. and Dyvik, S. (2024). 'Homes for Ukraine' and the politics of private humanitarian hospitality. *Review of International Studies.* (Online). DOI: 10.1017/S0260210524000470.

Deacon, A. (2004). Justifying conditionality: the case of anti-social tenants. *Housing Studies,* 19 (6), 911 – 926.

Flint, J. (2018). Encounters with the centaur state: advanced urban marginality and the practices and ethics of welfare sanctions regimes. *Urban Studies,* 1. (Online). DOI: 10.1177/0042098017750070.

Forbes, D., Alkemade, N., Waters, E., Gibbs, L., Gallagher, C., Pattison, P., Lusher, D., MacDougall, C., Harms, L., Block, K., Snowden, E., Kellet, C., Sinnott, V., Ireton, G., Richardson, J. and Bryant, R. A. (2015). The role of anger and ongoing stressors in mental health following a natural disaster. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry,* 49 (8), 706-713.

Home Office (2023). *Anti-social behaviour: impacts on individuals and local communities*. London: Home Office.

Institute of Race Relations (2023). *BME statistics on poverty and deprivation.* (Online). London: Institute of Race Relations. Available at: http://irr.org.uk/research/statistics/poverty/ (Accessed 17 March 2025)

Jones, A., Pleace, N., Quilgards, D. and Sanderson, D. (2006). *Addressing antisocial behaviour: an independent review of Shelter Inclusion Project.* London: Shelter Publications.

Kiely, E. and Swirak, K. (2022). *The criminalisation of social policy in neoliberal societies.* Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Lewis, C. (2020). Listening to community: the aural dimensions of neighbouring. *The Sociological Review,* 68 (1), 94-109.

Mackenzie, S., Bannister, J., Flint, J., Parr, S., Millie, A. and Fleetwood, J. (2010). *The drivers of perceptions of antisocial behaviour*. London: The Home Office.

Mort, L. and Morris, M. (2020). *Communities up close: neighbourhood change and migration in Yorkshire and Humber.* Leeds and Manchester: Migration Yorkshire and IPPR.

Mort, L., Qureshi, A., Liuta, J., Mahmood, S. and Yemane, R. (2022). *Building the foundations for social connections in Yorkshire and the Humber.* Manchester: IPPR.

Millie, A. (2008). Anti-social behaviour, behavioural expectations and an urban aesthetic. *British Journal of Criminology*. 48 (1), 379 - 394.

Murray, S., Welland., S. and Storry, M. (2024). *Still living a nightmare: understanding the experiences of victims of anti-social behaviour.* London: Victims Commissioner's Office.

Newlove, H. (2019). *Anti-social behaviour: living a nightmare*. London: Victims' Commissioner's Office/Nottingham Trent University.

Prior, D. (2009). Disciplining the multicultural community: ethnic diversity and the governance of anti-social behaviour. *Social Policy and Society,* 9 (1), 133 – 143.

Prior, D. and Spalek, B. (2008). Anti-social behaviour and minority ethnic populations. In P. Squires (Eds). *ASBO nation: the criminalisation of nuisance.* Bristol: Policy Press, pp. 117-134.

Taylor, J., Twigg, L. and Mohan, J. (2010). Investigating perceptions of antisocial behaviour and neighbourhood ethnic heterogeneity in the British Crime Survey. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers,* 35 (1), 59 – 75.

Tufail, W., Bhatia, M. and Poynting, S. (2023). Introduction for racism, violence and harm: ideology, media and resistance. In M. Bhatia (Eds). *Racism, violence and harm: ideology, media and resistance.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Valente, R. and Crescenzi-Lanna, L. (2022). Feeling unsafe as a source of psychological distress in early adolescence. *Social Science and Medicine,* 293. (Online). DOI: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114643