



CHILDREN WHOSE BEHAVIOUR INDICATES A LACK OF PARENTAL CONTROL

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1.1 When children are brought to the attention of the police or the wider community because of their behaviour, this may be an indication of vulnerability, poor supervision or neglect in the wider sense. It is important to consider whether these are children in need and to offer them assistance and services that reflect their needs. This should be done on a multi-agency basis. A range of powers should be used to engage families to improve the child's behaviour where engagement cannot be secured on a voluntary basis.

1.2 A child safety order (CSO) is a compulsory intervention available below the threshold of the child being at risk of significant harm. A local authority can apply for a CSO where a child has committed an act that would have been an offence if s/he were aged 10 or above, where it is necessary to prevent such an act, or where the child has caused harassment, distress or harm to others (i.e. behaved antisocially).

1.3 It is designed to help the child improve his or her behaviour, and is likely to be used alongside work with the family and others to address any underlying problems.

1.4 A parenting order can be made alongside a CSO or when a CSO is breached. This provides an effective means of engaging with and supporting parents, while helping them develop their ability to undertake their parental responsibilities.

A parenting order consists of two elements:

- a requirement on the parent to attend counselling or guidance sessions (for example, parenting education or parenting support classes). This is the core of the parenting order and lasts for three months; and
- a requirement on the parent to comply with such requirements as are determined necessary by the court. This element can last up to 12 months.

1.5 Harassment and anti social behaviour by children can have a major impact on adults and other children living in a neighbourhood. Arrangements should ideally exist whereby local community safety teams can seek help or advice about when antisocial behaviour by children should be regarded as evidence of need.

1.6 Children may also be members of households in which a vulnerable adult is being neglected or mistreated and may participate in such neglect or mistreatment themselves. Arrangements should ideally exist in which local safeguarding adults' teams can seek help or advise about appropriate interventions for children in such cases. Staff working with children in need in households in which there are vulnerable adults should be alert to the possibilities of mistreatment of the vulnerable adult.

1.7 In case of behaviour problems at school, schools will need to make use of a full range of strategies when working to engage with parents, families and communities, including:

- offering specific support for parents and carers who need help either because their child is being bullied or in managing their child's behaviour. There is a range of support

mechanisms available in schools and through partner agencies but parents and carers need to feel this support is accessible to them;

- employing some of the formal strategies for parental engagement including the use of parenting contracts and home-school agreements. Many parents will react positively to such offers of help and particularly value group support;
- some schools find that the use of an education related parenting contract for behaviour is helpful in protecting the interests of the child. This is a voluntary arrangement between the parent and school/local authority; and
- parenting orders can also be applied for by a school or local authority where a parent has refused or failed to comply with a parenting contract and where the court considers that parenting is a factor in the child's behaviour.

1.8 An education related parenting order is a civil court order which consists of the same two elements as standard parenting orders, except that they focus specifically on improving the behaviour and attendance of the child²⁵³.

1.9 Parent Support Advisers (PSAs) can enable the school-home relationship to grow and flourish. There is a comprehensive package of materials available from the Training and Development Agency for Schools on PSAs, which local authorities can draw upon when considering what information to include in their training materials. Guidance on securing parental involvement in managing pupil behaviour is due to be updated in 2010.

253 More information can be found at: www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/pcspospns/