

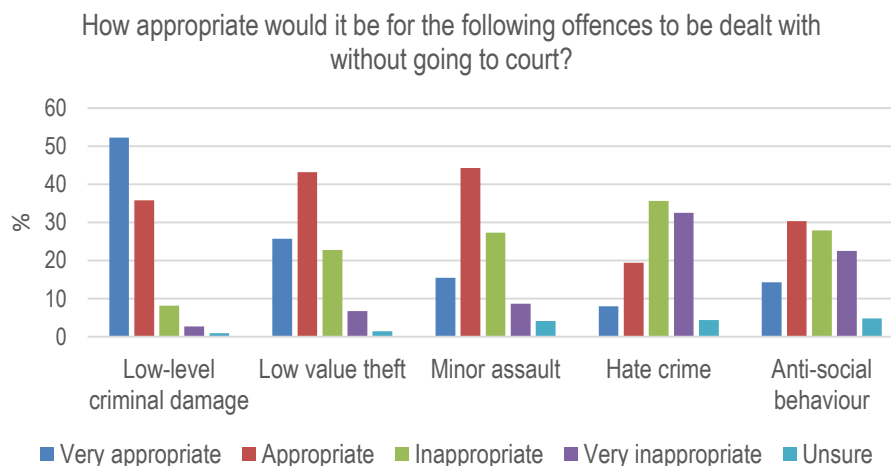
CONSULTATION FINDINGS – COMMUNITY REMEDY

CONTEXT

In July 2014 the OPCC launched public consultation on the community remedy via an online survey, focused on understanding public opinion on three key points: what offences community remedy should cover, what options it should include, and what the other concerns or viewpoints surrounding it are. In total there were 419 responses to the survey.

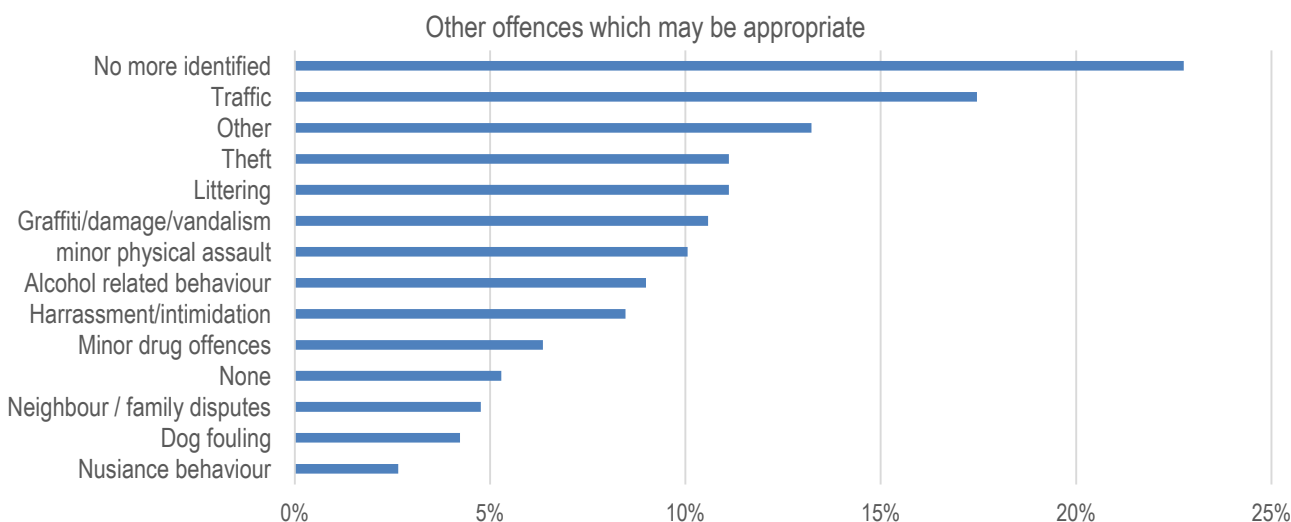
APPROPRIATE OFFENCES

Respondents were asked to assess how appropriate it would be for a number of offences to be dealt with outside of court.



The majority of respondents felt that it was appropriate for low-level criminal damage (88.0%), low value theft (68.9%) and minor assaults (59.9%) to be dealt with without going to court, however the majority of respondents felt that it was inappropriate to deal with hate crime (68.2%) in this way. Opinions on ASB were more evenly split with only 44.8% believing it was appropriate – respondents typically felt noise was the most suitable to be dealt with in this way followed closely by graffiti/damage and nuisance behaviour.

The survey also asked respondents to suggest other offences that would be suitable to be dealt with in this way. 189 respondents answered this question, the majority (22.8%) stated that there were no additional offences that should be included, however the inclusion of traffic violations also gained a reasonable level of support.



Generally, respondents felt that the remedy should not be used for:

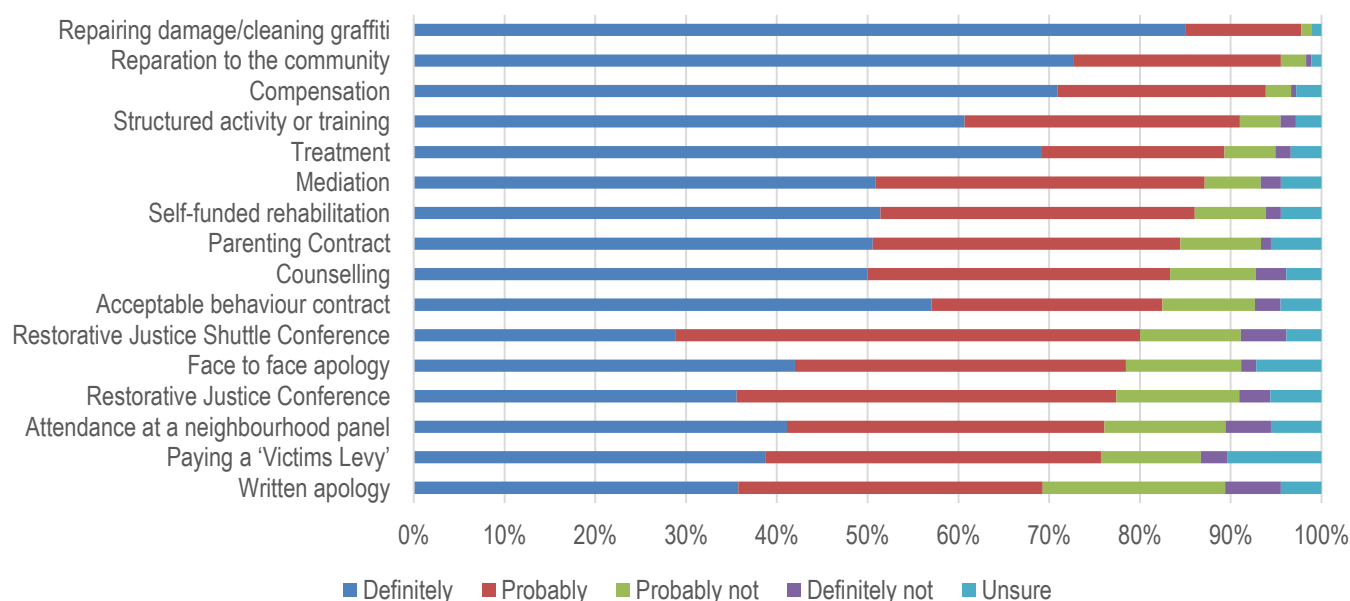
- Cases of violence
- Malicious behaviour
- Persistent targeting/behaviour

They also felt that remedy use should be considered on an individual basis, for first time offences, for those who it may work with and where it is appropriate and has victim consent.

OPTIONS AVAILABLE WITHIN COMMUNITY REMEDY

Respondents were asked what options should be made available within the community remedy in West Yorkshire. Respondents were asked to assess a list of tasks for how appropriate it would be for police and victims to choose, and for offenders to complete.

Remedy options sorted by % saying option is definitely and probably appropriate



The majority of respondents supported the use of all of the options. All options (aside from a written apology) had 70%+ of respondents agreeing that it was definitely or probably appropriate. The more highly supported options appear to be reparation based with repairing damage, reparation to community, structured activity or training, and compensation which all have 90%+ of respondents agreeing that they are appropriate options.

Other options suggested by respondents included: community cleaning (30.3%), this includes litter picking, clearing dog foul, cleaning graffiti and clearing of wasteland and overgrown public areas; and volunteering at community centres, charities and nursing homes (14.2%) and assisting the old and vulnerable (9.5%). Many said there were no additional suggestions, reinforcing the options previously suggested.

ADDITIONAL POINTS

Respondents were asked if there was anything else that they would like to say about the suggested activities or the community remedy more generally. Key themes were:

Implementation - There were a large number of people who said they thought that the idea of community remedy was good in principle but that consideration would have to be given to how it is managed, monitored and enforced; "*I am rather sceptical of the concept because many offenders do not follow court orders i.e. fines until threatened with custody*". This was echoed by a number of other respondents who asked "*how will it be enforced?*", and "*what would the next steps be if this procedure failed?*"

Shared responsibility

Many respondents believe that the police should not be the lead on community remedy, in fact more responsibility should be "*put back on to the councils and local community groups with the support of the Police Community Support Officer*". It was noted that the lesser nature of the offences associated with community remedy suggest that it would be suitable for "*a community-appointed group deal with it all*".

Within reason

The term "*within reason*" was used on numerous occasions throughout these responses in order to put across two different schools of thought; the first one being that community remedy should only be used if the offence is "*within reason*" i.e. low level, the other is that the victim's opinions should be taken into consideration but only "*within reason*" i.e. care should be taken to ensure that the punishment suggested by the victim is proportionate to the offence.