

[Mandatory parenting needs assessment ? ASBOs](#) [1]

Written by [Tim Ambler](#) [2] | Sunday 7 February 2010



Daft Regulation of the Month

ASBOs provide "the last opportunity for young people to mend their ways before entering the criminal justice system. Parenting orders can be attached to ASBOs but the take up is low and the ASBO breach rate for young people is 64%." In other words, two thirds of ASBOs definitely don't work. Correlation between a lack of further offences and fewer ASBOs does not prove that the ASBOs work, only that some kids don't get caught again or the authorities can't be bothered with another ASBO. So it's likely that 80% of ASBOs don't work.

Home Office remedial action? More of the same. They make no attempt to discover why ASBOs don't work or find a better solution to teenage misbehaviour. Their answer is this regulation which requires a "Mandatory parenting needs assessment." In other words, a council official will turn up at the naughty teenager's home and explain to mum and dad how the local agencies will identify their failings. This should be welcome news in most run down estates, but that is as far as it goes. There is nothing in this regulation on how these needs would be fulfilled once assessed? What happens if, as seems likely, the parents don't want to have their habits changed by the visiting do-gooders?

Being imaginative people, the Home Office considered three options to deal with this unruly teenager problem: do nothing; require parenting needs assessment through "non-statutory guidance"; or make it mandatory for the agency concerned. Apparently this third option is "is the only one that will ensure compliance". The implementation date is after Royal Assent (amazing!) and the Home Office states that the costs and benefits are "unknown". "Parenting assessments shouldtheoretically lead to fewer ASBO breaches if parents are better equipped to care for their children." The Home Office suggests that a reduction in ASBOs would be an indicator of success. It might also be an indicator that everyone considers them to be a waste of time. Was this stupid regulation tested in a small part of the country? Of course not. There were no "specific impact tests".

This blog is part of the ongoing series: Daft regulation of the month. The first port of call for any government that is really committed to cutting useless red tape. Click [here](#)_[3] to find out more.

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- [1] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/regulation-and-industry/mandatory-parenting-needs-assessment-%E2%80%93-asbos>
- [2] <http://www.adamsmith.org/taxonomy/term/5859>
- [3] <http://www.adamsmith.org/blog/regulation-and-industry/daft-regulation-of-the-month>
- [4] http://disqus.com/?ref_noscript
- [5] <http://disqus.com>