

Closure orders to reduce crime and persistent nuisance

Nottinghamshire Police have increased their use of closure orders on properties linked to crime or persistent nuisance. By removing access, these orders protect vulnerable people and restore peace while improving partner working with local agencies.

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Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Adults at risk Anti-social behaviour Drugs and alcohol offences
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Region	East Midlands
Partners	Police Local authority
Stage of implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	December 2022

Key details

Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Communities General public

Aim

Closure orders were introduced to provide a rapid and decisive response to properties linked to serious crime or persistent anti-social behaviour. Traditional policing methods often rely on repeated visits, warnings, and lengthy processes that fail to break the cycle of harm. The broad aim of this initiative is to protect communities by removing access to premises that generate significant risk, nuisance, or criminality. By doing so, closure Orders can safeguard vulnerable individuals, reduce repeat demand on policing resources, and restore public confidence in affected neighbourhoods.

Unlike business-as-usual approaches, closure orders offer a legal mechanism to disrupt harmful activity and prevent further escalation. They enable police and partners to act collaboratively, ensuring that enforcement is balanced with support for those displaced or affected. This approach reflects a commitment to problem-solving and harm reduction, rather than short-term fixes. Ultimately, the initiative seeks to create safer, more resilient communities by addressing the root cause of persistent issues and preventing them from returning.

Intended outcome

- reduction in reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) linked to identified properties within three months of a closure order
- decrease in repeat calls for service to problem premises compared to pre-order levels
- improved community confidence and feelings of safety, measured through local surveys and public feedback
- reduction in crime figures directly associated with the closed property (for example, drug-related offences, violence)

- lower demand on policing resources, evidenced by fewer repeat deployments to the same address
- visible improvement in neighbourhood quality of life, reflected in fewer complaints and positive community engagement
- public feedback showing residents speak positively about their lives and sense of safety, gathered during evidence collection for closure order extensions
- successful safeguarding and support for vulnerable individuals, tracked through partnership referrals and outcomes

Description

Closure orders, introduced under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, provide a fast and effective way to deal with properties linked to serious crime or persistent anti-social behaviour. Traditional approaches such as repeated visits, warnings, and arrests often fail to break the cycle of harm and demand. Closure orders give communities a chance to feel safe again.

When a property becomes a hub for criminal activity or nuisance behaviour, it doesn't just affect the people inside; it impacts the whole neighbourhood. Residents can feel trapped, intimidated, or even forced to move away. This creates fear, instability, and long-term harm. Closure orders aim to change that. By restricting access to problem properties, they remove negative influences, reduce harm, and create safer spaces for families and children to grow up with the same opportunities as everyone else.

Setting the scene

Historically, closure orders were not well used across the force. Problem addresses were dealt with through repeat visits, warnings, arrests where possible, and then left accessible once police action had finished. This allowed serial offenders to continue using the same addresses to commit crime and cause anti-social behaviour. The focus was often on the individual, rather than the property that was enabling the harm, which resulted in repeat demand and ongoing impact on the wider community.

Closure orders were considered as a power that could be used to deal with high harm addresses more effectively and would provide a better and longer-term solution. Now, they are used widely in Nottinghamshire Police to deal with addresses that cause harm to the public through crime and

anti-social behaviour. This includes their use following cannabis cultivation warrants, particularly where there are links to organised crime groups. In these cases, closure orders are used to prevent addresses from being reused and to send a clear message that this type of criminality is being actively challenged.

Closure orders are also used for addresses linked to repeat reports of ASB or crime, where leaving the property accessible would likely result in further incidents. Closure orders will also be considered as a follow up to warrants or enforcement activity to prevent offenders returning to or reoccupying an address.

Partial closure orders have also been utilised to safeguard vulnerable people. This is particularly relevant in cases of cuckooing, where vulnerable occupants are exploited. Partial closure orders allow victims to remain in their homes while stopping those causing the harm from gaining access again through proactive policing and arresting those who are caught breaching the court order.

Types of closure orders

- Full closure order – completely shuts down the property. No one is allowed inside for up to three months (extendable to six). This is used when the harm is severe and immediate action is needed.
- Partial closure order – allows the occupier to remain but stops anyone else from entering without lawful reason. This is often used in safeguarding cases, such as when a vulnerable tenant is being exploited so they can stay in their home while harmful visitors are kept out.

Process

- identify the problem – reports from the community, intelligence, and partner referrals highlight properties causing harm
- gather evidence – crime data, community impact statements, and safeguarding concerns build the case
- work with partners – housing teams, social care, and safeguarding services help plan the intervention
- legal preparation – the police legal team prepares the evidence bundle for court
- issue a closure notice – signed by an inspector or superintendent, this notice restricts access for 48 hours while waiting for the court hearing

- court application – the police apply for a closure order (full or partial) lasting up to three months, extendable to six
- secure the property – boarding up doors and displaying legal notices if needed
- support and monitor – help displaced residents and check compliance throughout the order period

Resources required

- police officers for evidence gathering and court attendance (police community support officers can also gather evidence)
- legal team for case preparation and presentation
- partnership support for housing and safeguarding
- partnership support from the local authority or housing agencies to secure the order
- costs (often recoverable through court through the police legal teams)

Overall impact

Nottinghamshire Police are using closure orders as a practical solution. Teams across the force have been educated on best practice and the approach has been embedded into different units. This has led to reductions in crime in some of the force's most challenging hotspot areas which are frequently evidenced when applying for 'closure order extensions', as this is a requirement for the evidence prior to court.

A recent closure order for an address linked to drug dealing saw 23 separate incidents relating to crime, ASB and drugs being reported to the police alone. During and following this closure order, there were no further reports made to the police. The force have consistently observed that when a closure order is granted, crime at or near to the property in question generally stops any reports from the day the order is made.

The impact goes far beyond crime statistics. When officers speak to residents after a closure order, they have reported improvements, such as: "I can finally sleep at night", "I can have friends and family round again" and "I've started decorating my garden." These are simple things, but they mean so much to people who have lived in fear for months or even years.

This work also rebuilds trust and confidence as the community are involved at every stage. Closure orders are a visible deterrent, and through evidence gathering the force create new connections

with schools, housing providers, our communities and the local councils. These relationships have grown stronger over the years; now when a serious area is identified, the council seeks a notice of seeking possession (NOSP) for their properties, while the force apply the closure order. After that stage, the force can turn the property into a community hub for the council and police.

Closure orders are not just about disruption; they create safer spaces, restore confidence, and give communities the chance to thrive.

Learning

Implementing closure orders in Nottinghamshire has shown that this process is not difficult when approached with planning and partnership. The legal framework is clear, and once the steps are understood, the implementation becomes straightforward. The real challenge and the most important part is engaging with the community and drawing out the raw emotion that demonstrates the true impact these properties have on people's lives.

Successes

One of the biggest successes in Nottinghamshire has been how quickly communities respond. Residents have been supportive because they have lived with the harm caused by these addresses for too long. When they are spoken to after the closure order or whilst preparing for an extension, powerful stories are revealed detailing how their lives have been improved.

Partnership working has also been a major strength. Housing providers, local councils, and schools have been essential in gathering evidence and supporting residents. These relationships have grown stronger through the process, and in some cases, problem properties have been turned into community hubs where police and council staff are visible and accessible to everyone. This shows a dedication to being there for local communities, removing harm, and investing in their futures.

Challenges

The hardest part is not the paperwork of the process; it is encouraging people to speak up. Many residents have lived with fear and intimidation for so long that they hesitate to share what is happening out of fear of being targeted. Building trust is crucial. Officers need to listen, reassure, and show that action will follow. Evidence gathering can be demanding, but it creates opportunities to strengthen relationships with partners and will strengthen cases for court.

Advice for first-time implementation

- start with the community – speak to residents and schools early, their voices are powerful and will strengthen your case
- expect emotion – people will share stories that remind you why these matters. Be prepared to listen and act and let them speak
- build partnerships – engage housing, councils, schools and safeguarding teams from the start as they're essential
- plan for resources – factor in officer time and legal support
- think beyond enforcement – closure orders are not just about shutting doors, they are about reducing crime, rebuilding trust, and creating safer space
- think – what would you want to hear and see if you were the Magistrate listening to the application?

Closure Orders are more than enforcement, they are a first step toward real change. They can disrupt organised crime, protect the vulnerable, and give communities back their freedom.

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