Getting a ‘grip’ on the ‘troubled’ family: The familial consequences of the eviction process in a neoliberal society

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Abstract

Despite consistent political, academic and media interest in ‘troublesome’ families and anti-social behaviour the voices of those on the receiving end of various familial interventions largely remain unheard. However, it has been increasingly recognised that white, lone female parents are the primary recipients of political interventions to alleviate anti-social behaviour. This qualitative research addressed this gendered, classed, ethnicity and disability based phenomenon by eliciting the experiences of those threatened, and/or evicted from social housing because of the anti-social behaviour of other members of the household. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with those at various stages of the eviction process who were working with a Family Intervention Project in the south of England. The participants employed various practices and strategies to mediate the familial consequences of the eviction process and were far from the feckless parents portrayed in popular and policy discourses. These mediatory practices and strategies entailed engaging with the temporal demands of numerous tutelary agencies and were undertaken against a backdrop of ongoing intra familial violence and intra communal conflict, which blurs any simplistic dichotomy between the victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. The narratives of the participants also revealed the necessity of having a voice within these multi-agency interactions and their own recommendations for alleviating their circumstances, and as such provide valuable insights for academics, policy makers, practitioners and other ‘troubled’ families experiencing similarly deleterious housing sanctions.
Acknowledgements

I am dedicating this thesis to my long since passed grandparents, Harry and Hilda, and my son H, who is always my sunshine when skies are grey. I would also like to dedicate it to the parent/s who granted me privileged access to their difficult and precarious lives. I would personally like to thank my supervisory team of Professor Jon Garland and Professor Rachel Brooks for their unwavering support, kindness, patience, guidance, and for putting up with the occasional bolshie rant. My only regret is that I never had them earlier in my PhD journey. I would also like to thank my partner Tracy for all of the love and support she has given me throughout.
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Open a few dossiers of delinquent or morally endangered children. In the multiplicity of documents, of decisions rendered with their reasons adduced, of reports of educative assistance, and medicopsychological opinions, you will have the impression of an endless reiteration of the same discourse (Donzelot, 1980: 117).

Respectability is one of the most ubiquitous signifiers of class. It informs how we speak, who we speak to, how we classify others, what we study and how we know who we are (or are not). Respectability is usually the concern of those who are not seen to have it. Respectability would not be of concern here, if the working classes (Black and White) had not consistently been classified as dangerous, polluting, threatening, revolutionary, pathological and without respect (Skeggs, 1997: 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Acceptable Behaviour Contract</td>
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<tr>
<td>APVA</td>
<td>Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse</td>
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<td>ASB</td>
<td>Anti-Social Behaviour</td>
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<td>ASBO</td>
<td>Anti-Social Behaviour Order</td>
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<td>ASBU</td>
<td>Anti-Social Behaviour Unit</td>
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<td>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Crime Behaviour Order</td>
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<td>Community Legal Advice Centre</td>
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<td>CPI</td>
<td>Crime Prevention Injunction</td>
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<td>CPO</td>
<td>Community Protection Order</td>
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<td>FIP</td>
<td>Family Intervention Project</td>
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<td>FIT</td>
<td>Family Intervention Tenancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>MABS</td>
<td>Multi-Agency Behavioural Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEET</td>
<td>Not in Education Employment or Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>NOSP</td>
<td>Notice of Seeking Possession</td>
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<td>PDP</td>
<td>Police Discretion Powers</td>
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<td>SENCO</td>
<td>Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator</td>
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<td>SHS</td>
<td>Supported Housing Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>Temporary Accommodation Service</td>
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<td>TFP</td>
<td>Troubled Families Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>TSS</td>
<td>Tenancy Support Service</td>
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<td>YOT</td>
<td>Youth Offending Team</td>
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Despite ‘the cacophony of voices’ emanating from political, media and academic interest into anti-social behaviour (ASB) and problematic parenting, the voices of the families requiring intervention largely remain unheard (Stephen and Squires, 2004, p. 354; Morris and Featherstone, 2010; Bond-Taylor, 2014: *inter alia*). With regards to political articulations a recurring theme within successive governmental policy and rhetoric is that the prevalence of ASB (and crime more generally) within impoverished communities is the corollary of ‘problem’ or ‘troubled’ families requiring increased and earlier statutory and non-statutory intervention into their lives. Moreover, within these numerous discourses the issues of inadequate ‘feckless’ parenting and the intergenerational transmission of criminality and ASB are explicitly invoked (see Respect Task Force, 2006a, 2006b; Cameron, 2011b, 2011c; Casey, 2012). The latest manifestation of this neoliberal crusade against inept working-class parenting is the TFP and the continuing utilisation of Family Intervention Projects (FIPs). When the Prime Minister David Cameron (2011b) launched the TFP in 2011, he defined the ‘troubled’ family as those responsible for ‘a large proportion of the problems in society’ such as ASB, crime, truancy, drug addiction and alcohol abuse. Moreover, these troublesome families exemplified ‘a culture of disruption and irresponsibility that cascades through generations’ (ibid: no page number). These enduring social problems are to be addressed through familial interventions and undertaken by local authorities through the FIPs that were introduced under the previous Labour government’s Respect Agenda (see Chapter 3). As Hayden and Jenkins (2015) suggest, these persistent social problems are underpinned by poverty, mental health issues and a lack of opportunity and are particularly evident within the residualised social housing sector¹, and as such illustrate how

¹ For the purposes of this and the following chapters ‘social housing’ refers to the housing provided for those in need by local authorities, housing associations and arm’s length management organisations (ALMOs) (see Hunter *et al.*, 2007b).
crime, ASB and poverty have become intimately linked through family-based social policies such as the TFP.

This thesis will later include the statutory definition of ASB (see Chapter 3), but acknowledges that the generally imprecise definition of ASB gives the label its power (Prior, 2009; Manders, 2010). Despite this lack of a precise definition it has been astutely contended that ‘anti-social behaviour is emphatically about perceptions, relationships and interactions and contexts’ (Squires, 2008: 368). This thesis will examine the perceptions, relationships, interactions and contexts for those deemed as ‘troubled’ families and working with a local Family Intervention Project (FIP) because of the alleged ASB of other members of the household. It also has to be acknowledged however, that the previous Coalition and subsequent Conservative government are acutely aware that compliance with the TFP is only ultimately secured through the sanction of the threat of eviction and the concomitant prospect of losing children to the care system (see Casey, 2012).

Previous research into ASB and social housing evictions has noted that lone-parent mothers are the main recipients of such interventions (primarily because of the ASB of males within the household) (see Hunter & Nixon, 2001). Nonetheless, there has been a relative dearth of attention paid to the gendered aspects of the phenomenon (Carr, 2007; 2010; Morris and Featherstone, 2010; Bond-Taylor, 2014), and there still remains an absence of qualitative research into the specific behavioural problems that prompt social landlords to utilise their ASB powers (Hunter et al., 2007a), and no research that has directly examined the familial consequences of the eviction process. Despite these omissions it has been noted that contemporary TFP interventions are primarily targeting poor, white, lone female parents and their children, who inhabit the residualised social housing sector (Bond-Taylor, 2014; Crossley, 2015; inter alia). As such, this thesis will not only consider the salience of gender but will extend and enhance current academic literature by examining its complex interplay with the dynamics of class and white ethnicity. The concept of intersectionality is employed to illustrate ‘how multiple dimensions of oppression (such as race, gender, class, sexuality, disability) work

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2 Louise Casey leads the Troubled Families Unit and is based in Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and was the former head of the previous Labour government’s Anti-Social Behaviour Unit.
relationally, sometimes in union, sometimes in conflict, sometimes in uncertain and unpredictable ways’ (Gillborn, 2010: 4). Moreover, this research will also provide valuable and substantive insights into the impact and utility of contemporary ASB housing interventions and the TFP more generally, for policy makers, practitioners, academics and the recipients themselves.

The primary motivations for this interpretive research come from my personal biography and the enduring trials and tribulations of being a member of an extremely ‘troubled’ family. As such, I have advocated for my sister during multi-agency meetings and have also undertaken a similar role as a youth worker for young offenders. I have always lived in social housing and previously received an eviction notice for rent arrears and found the whole experience thoroughly upsetting. I was also raised in poverty by a single mother and had a misspent youth that would undoubtedly be considered as ‘anti-social’ in the current climate. These previous experiences sparked my scholastic interest in ASB and the Troubled Families Programme (TFP), and how those threatened with, or actually evicted from social housing mediate the familial consequences of the eviction process, and their numerous interactions with the multi-agencies involved. The issue of familiarity with the participants will be returned to in Chapter 4.

1.1 Aims of the Thesis

This research addresses the considerable impasses noted earlier in this chapter by empirically examining and eliciting the experiences of those considered as ‘troubled families’ within the residualised social housing sector. In order to examine and elicit the experiences of those on the receiving end of the eviction process and the TFP, this thesis utilised in-depth, semi-structured interviews with those working with a local FIP (see Chapter 4). The primary aims and objectives of this interpretive thesis is to give those deemed as ‘troubled’ families a much needed voice and examine how they mediated the familial consequences of the eviction process. The term

‘process’ is employed to encapsulate not only the various stages inherent within eviction proceedings, ranging from initial written warnings to Notices of Seeking Possession (NOSPs) to eviction, but also because the participants were at various stages of their involvement with the FIP. This focus on the eviction process will elucidate how the complex phenomenon of ASB housing sanctions and the TFP are layered with interventions from the state and non-statutory agencies and how these are navigated by individuals and households.

The findings chapters (5, 6 and 7) of this thesis will reveal that the participants adopted various strategies to improve their parenting practices and to curtail the ASB of other members of the household, both within and outside the familial home. However, for some, their attempts to alleviate ASB and install boundaries could often exacerbated intra-familial and intra-communal conflict and this thesis will illustrate the gendered and classed dimensions to these ongoing tensions. Some were desperately attempting to appease the temporal demands for behavioural improvements from the numerous agencies involved, whilst also being subjected to forms of parental abuse from their primarily male children. All of the parent/s were working with a local FIP and all but one household (see Chapter 5) commenced their intervention after the eviction process had started. Other than this one household, and one facing eviction from a privately rented property, all of the parent/s had either been evicted or threatened with eviction from social housing by their local housing association or local authority.

The majority of the participants had long and enduring histories of numerous multi-agency involvements in their lives (see Chapter 5). To encapsulate these ongoing and numerous multi-agency interactions this thesis employed Donzelot’s (1980) conceptualisations of ‘supervised freedom’ and the ‘tutelary complex’ (see Chapter 3). This thesis also engaged with more recent formulations of Bourdieu’s (1986) habitus (see Barker, 2016) and social class distinctions (see Watt, 2006), and Wacquant’s (2008) premise regarding ‘advanced marginality’ as the corollary of neoliberal economic policies (see Chapter 3). However, it will also become apparent that the ‘critical disciplinary role of gender’ (Carr, 2007; 2010) and notions of ‘respectability’ reverberate not only throughout the history and management of social housing, but are also intimately entwined within the participants’ experiences.
1.2 Outline of Thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction: Situating ‘Troubled Families’

This introductory chapter will commence with a condensed overview of the phenomenon of ASB, the TFP and housing interventions, and will primarily situate the salience of my research within the relevant academic and policy literature and my motivations for the research. This positioning chapter will provide a broad description of my overall aims and objectives and as such will consider the lacunae within existing literature. The chapter will also provide a brief overview of the main theoretical concepts employed and extended in this interpretive research.

Chapter 2: The History and Management of Social Housing: From the Rookeries to ‘Homes fit for Heroes’ to Managing the ‘Respectable/Rough Dichotomy

This and the chapter that follows can be read as a thematic whole and will primarily discuss the extent to which the provision and management of social housing has involved aspects of social and behavioural control over those inhabitants deemed as problematic. As such, it will commence with a detailed consideration of the living conditions of the urban working classes prior to state intervention in the nineteenth century and the types of accommodation available, then introduce the key housing policies that subsequently led to the provision and management of large scale municipal housing in the twentieth century, and beyond. The three primary objectives of these two chapters are to consider whether or not contemporary housing interventions to alleviate ASB constitute a significant rupture in the historical role has played in the governance of conduct (see Flint, 2006); discuss how socio-political perceptions of social housing and its tenants have changed since its inception (see Ravetz, 2001; Malpass, 2005); and situate my research with a more orthodox literature review in regards to ASB, the TFP and ‘troubled’ families more generally.

Chapter 3: Framing Contemporary Housing ‘Problems’: ‘Sink Estates’ and the Residualisation of Social Housing

This second chapter on the history and management of social housing will continue by noting the socio-political perceptions of the more problematic council housing estates and their inhabitants from approximately the 1960s onwards. This chapter will then concentrate on the housing legislation since the advent of the New Right inspired Conservative governments between 1979
and 1997. The chapter will continue with a consideration of the housing interventions to alleviate ASB and social exclusion since New Labour’s election victory in 1997 through to the more contemporary era. The chapter will culminate with a more orthodox review of the relevant literature regarding contemporary housing interventions into the governance of problematic tenants’ behaviour within the social housing sector, and critically review the TFP and FIP literature. This chapter will conclude by drawing together the significant themes from both chapters in an extended conclusion.

Chapter 4: Methodology

This methodology chapter will commence with a practical consideration of my overall research strategy; as such it will firstly focus upon the aims and objectives of the study and the framing of the major research questions. This chapter will then continue with a consideration of the research location and the demographics of the participants. The chapter will then continue with details of how those who partook in this research were sampled and recruited; the utility of, and justification for, the intensive semi-structured interviews that were employed; how the research questions and interview schedule were developed; and how the interview data generated were subsequently coded and analysed; and finally my ethical considerations.

Chapter 5: Becoming Labelled as an ‘Anti-Social’ Household in a Multi-Agency World

This chapter will be the first of my three findings chapters and will introduce the participants’ experiences of their previous multi-agency involvements and will highlight their enduring and constant vulnerability. This chapter will reveal how those involved with a local FIP are enmeshed within the tutelary complex (see Chapter 3) through their ongoing and problematic interactions with numerous statutory and non-statutory agencies. The chapter will then continue with the participants’ perceptions of the actual events that precipitated the eviction process and led to their subsequent involvement with a local FIP, and as such provide valuable insights into the neighbourhood problems that prompt social landlords into using ASB housing sanctions. This focus on the events that led to their current predicaments will exemplify the futility of any simplistic distinction between the perpetrators and victims of ASB and how primarily lone-
parent females were not only being held responsible for their children’s ASB, but also the disruptive behaviour of young males from outside their immediate household.

**Chapter 6: Living the Tutelary Complex: Mediating the Familial Consequences of the Threat of Eviction**

This as the second of my three findings chapters will introduce and examine how the participants mediated the familial consequences of the eviction process. This will reveal that far from being ‘feckless’ parents the participants employed various practices to avoid further allegations of ASB, whilst living with the daunting prospect of homelessness and for some the possibility of losing their children to the care system. Moreover, some experienced forms of Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA) and also suffered from depression and the mental health issues of other members of the household. This chapter will also include the detrimental consequences the eviction process had not only for parent/s, but also for other members of the household. This focus on APVA and the negative consequences for other family members will enhance and extend the existing policy and academic literature, and as such represents one of the most original and significant findings of this interpretive research.

**Chapter 7: Avoiding Becoming Labelled as an ‘Anti-Social’ Household: The Parent/s’ Views on Preventative Measures**

This as the last of my three findings chapters will present the parent/s’ views on the FIP and the measures or levels of support they believe could have prevented or alleviated their current situations. Before explicating the participants’ experiences of the FIP the chapter will outline some of the inherent commonalities of this form of familial intervention. This chapter will include the parent/s’ opinions of their key workers and what they perceived as the negative and positive aspects of the intervention. It will also include a detailed consideration of the complex issues of empowerment and how some expressed feelings of attachment for their key workers. As such, this chapter will situate these findings in relation to current academic and policy literature that has discussed the efficacy of this form of familial intervention from the perspective of those involved in the eviction process and a local FIP. This chapter will not only address the gaps within existing literature but also enrich contemporary debates over the efficacy of this form of familial intervention.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

This concluding chapter will draw together and discuss the significant themes elucidated in the previous chapters of this thesis. It will commence with a brief overview of the history of social housing chapters (see Chapters 2 and 3) and then continue with the most salient contentions that were elucidated from the three findings chapters (see Chapters 5, 6 and 7). This conclusion will consider the important contribution the overall thesis has made, note the limitations of my research, and provide future lines of enquiry into this multi-faceted phenomenon. Moreover, it will extend and enhance the existing literature regarding housing and ASB interventions for academics, policy makers, practitioners and the recipients themselves.
CHAPTER 2

The History and Management of Social Housing: From the Rookeries to ‘Homes fit for Heroes’ to Managing the ‘Respectable/Rough’ Dichotomy.

2.1 Introduction

It has been suggested that contemporary housing interventions to alleviate ASB should be historically located because the management of social housing tenants has continually entailed aspects of social control, moral regulation and training (Atkinson, 2006; Carr & Cowan, 2006; Burney, 2005; Haworth & Manzi, 1999; Ravetz, 2001; Carr et al., 2007). For Flint (2006), the governance of social housing has always been considered within the context of wider debates regarding state intervention and welfare and as such inextricably linked to the issues of poverty and criminality. Moreover, these continuities raise the question of whether or not contemporary housing interventions to alleviate ASB constitute a rupture from the historical role housing has played in the governance of conduct.

This and the following chapter should be read as a thematic whole and as such will delineate and examine the provision and management of public housing within the context of the wider societal debates regarding poverty and criminality that Flint (2006) alludes to, and discuss how socio-political perceptions of social housing and its tenants have changed since its inception. As Card notes, the inhabitants of council housing ‘have in turn been seen as returning war heroes, the respectable working classes, morally suspect ex-slum dwellers, citizens with a right to a decent home, and over recent times either members of an “underclass” or the socially excluded’ (2006: 53). The focus upon these various perceptions of council tenants will elucidate how social housing problems have been consistently socially [re]constructed (Harloe, 1995; Malpass, 2005), and reveal the continuing salience of the dynamics of class, gender, ethnicity and disability upon this form of housing tenure and more contemporary social problems. This chapter’s historical analysis however, will commence with a detailed consideration of the deleterious living conditions of the urban working classes prior to state intervention in the nineteenth century and
the types of accommodation available, then introduce the key housing policies that subsequently led to the provision and management of large scale municipal housing in the twentieth century.

2.2 The ‘Quality Hierarchy’ of Working-class Accommodation in the 19th Century

According to Burnett (1986), it should be recognised that although concerns over the sanitary living conditions of working people can be traced back to the medieval period it was the nineteenth century that heralded policies to rectify the modern housing problem. By the mid-nineteenth century the total population of England and Wales had doubled from nearly nine million at the start of the century to just under eighteen million by 1851. Moreover, in 1801 20 per cent of the population inhabited rural areas, but by 1851 56 per cent of the population resided in urban locations. The primary reason for this migration from rural to urban areas was that industrialisation transformed the nation’s economy from one of farming to one of manufacturing. Furthermore, it could be argued that the rapid proliferation of towns and cities throughout the industrial revolution ‘was to have profound effects on almost every aspect of life’ (ibid: 7). These profound effects were most acutely experienced by urban inhabitants through the deleterious health consequences of impoverishment and overcrowding in various forms of sub-standard accommodation (Power, 1993).

For Burnett (1986: 58), there was a ‘quality hierarchy of accommodation’ available to the proliferating working-class inhabitants of urban areas in the nineteenth century. The lowest form of accommodation available were cellar-dwellings, which provided a ‘sub-human existence’ for its inhabitants with no ventilation in damp, dirty and overcrowded conditions where the typhus epidemic was rife. Those who resided in cellar-dwellings were invariably considered feckless and attributed with being the primary reason for the squalor and disease that was prevalent within industrial towns and cities. The next type of available working-class accommodation in Burnett’s ‘quality hierarchy’ was provided by lodging-houses. As Burnett

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4 Although omitted from Burnett’s analysis the workhouse was obviously a further type of accommodation available to the urban poor.

5 According to Burnett (1986), evidence of the inadequate sanitary conditions of some cellar-dwellings came primarily from the public health enquiries undertaken by Chadwick and his colleagues in the 1830s and 1840s.
notes, these were renowned for their overcrowding and criminality and as such required state intervention:

Because, at their worst, such places represented an affront to decency and morality, an invitation to disease, crime and prostitution, common lodging-houses early pricked the Victorian conscience and were the first category of working class accommodation to come under legislative control (1986: 62).

The Common Lodging Houses Act was initiated by Lord Shaftesbury in 1851, and introduced the requirement that owners of lodging-houses register their properties for inspection and set minimum standards of ventilation, size (basement bedrooms were prohibited) and cleanliness. Moreover, sexual relations also became regulated because tenants who were unmarried were supposed to be separated from the opposite sex (Burnett, 1986; Ravetz, 2001). The next piece of housing legislation followed in the Artisans and Labourers’ Dwellings Act 1868 (the ‘Torrens Act’) and directly targeted slum housing. This Act provided local councils with the power to close inhabitable properties, and the right to force owners to rectify or demolish insanitary housing. Furthermore, if the owners refused, councils could repair or demolish the properties and make the owners liable for the costs. However, the Artisans and Labourers’ Dwellings Improvement Act 1875 (the ‘Cross Act’) focused on towns with 20,000 inhabitants and above and set the standard for future slum clearances. In particular, once insanitary areas had been identified, the properties were compulsorily purchased and the owners generously compensated if demolition followed. The compensation costs incurred by local councils meant that in reality slum clearance at the time was a relatively unused option\(^6\). Moreover, although the 1868 ‘Torrens Act’ suggested that local authorities should provide working-class housing, any form of state intervention was vehemently opposed by some leading reformers such as Lord Shaftesbury and the Charity Organization Society (CSO) primarily because (like charity in general) subsidized housing would have a corrupting influence upon the poor (Ravetz, 2001).

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\(^6\) In London, however, over 100,000 people were displaced through slum clearance schemes between 1830 and 1880 (Malpass, 2005: 37).
It should also be acknowledged however, that Victorian concerns over public health were not just predicated upon ‘the elimination of physical disease, but encompassed the moral and social health of the “dangerous classes”’ (Carr et al., 2007: 103). For example, in 1866 the first general review of the conditions inherent within working-class housing was published by James Hole, who inextricably linked poor housing conditions with criminality and moral evils such as illegitimacy and infanticide (Ravetz, 2001). As the housing historian Enid Gauldie (1974) lucidly contends, early slum clearance schemes were primarily undertaken to eradicate the criminogenic dispositions of the ‘dangerous classes’:

The first and most sweeping improvement schemes were deliberately driven through the most criminal areas, with the dispersal of criminals from their haunts, and the suppression of crime as the first motive. The fact that these haunts were in most cases also the most insanitary parts of the cities was a secondary consideration (Gauldie, 1974, cited by Carr et al., 2007:103)

Lodging-houses were virtually indistinguishable from the tenements with the main difference in a practical sense being the length of tenancy agreements. For instance, lodging-houses were primarily intended for short-term migrants, whereas tenements could be rented by the week, month or quarter, however, in practice this temporal distinction was rarely maintained. Essentially, tenementing referred to the sub-division of houses into separate rooms or floors for renting and in the mid-nineteenth century they were known as ‘rookeries’, and as such became ‘the origins of the slums’ (Burnett, 1986: 64). The appellation ‘slum’ was originally used to describe quiet back alleys, however, by the mid-nineteenth century the term became increasingly associated with densely populated areas with disease-ridden housing and various types of criminality and depravity. Moreover, it was widely believed that slums were engendered through the customs of their inhabitants rather than being a consequence of the detrimental housing conditions (Ravetz, 2001; Malpass, 2005). This deeply-rooted Victorian perception of slum dwellers as an immoral, criminally inclined, and a “race apart”, exemplified how slum housing became a platform for positivist debates regarding nature and nurture (Burney, 1999). These and other such debates were highly gendered and predicated upon the Victorian marital ideal. For example, the disciplinarian father was considered the conduit between the public sphere of work and the private realm of the family, whereas the loving mother was responsible for the upkeep of
the home and the socialisation of the children, and women who failed in these dual obligations were considered to be ‘bad mothers’ (Carr, 2007). The ‘ideal of ‘respectability’ was also inherent within the Victorian separation of public and private realms and women were considered not only as the ‘moral housekeeper’, but also as the ‘moral guardian of the male soul’ (Hunt, 1999: 82-83). The issue of ‘respectability’ was ‘a central mechanism through which the concept of class emerged’ and has retained a pervasive and enduring influence over working-class women’s identity (Skeggs, 1997: 2; Finch, 1993). It has been suggested that contemporary governmental interventions to combat ASB have their discursive origins in these Victorian notions and exemplify the historically enduring critical disciplinary role of gender (Carr, 2007; 2010).

In 1850, Thomas Beams used the following analogy to encapsulate the endemic impoverishment and spatial characteristics of the rookeries: ‘these pauper colonies and the nests of the birds from whom they take their name; the houses for the most part, high and narrow, with the largest possible number crowded together in a given space’ (cited by Burnett, 1986: 65). The living conditions for those unfortunate enough to occupy the rookeries were graphically illustrated at the time by the housing reformist the Reverend Andrew Mearns (1970 [1883]: 6):

Few who will read these pages have any conception of what these pestilential human rookeries are, where tens of thousands are crowded together amidst horrors which call to mind what we have heard of the middle passage of the slave ship. To get into them you have to penetrate courts reeking with poisonous and malodorous gases arising from accumulations of sewage and refuge scattered in all directions and often flowing beneath your feet; courts, many of them the sun never penetrates, which are never visited by a breath of fresh air, and which rarely know the virtues of a drop of cleansing water...You have to grope your way along dark and filthy passages swarming with vermin. Then, if you are not driven back by the intolerable stench, you may gain admittance to the dens in which these thousands of beings...herd together.

For Mearns, the rookeries were ‘hotbeds of vice and disease’ where poverty, immorality (such as incest) and criminality were conditions generationally transmitted amongst the inhabitants. For example, the child misery he encountered was attributed to ‘drunken and dissolute parents’ who ‘subjected’ their ‘utterly neglected’ offspring to the cruellest of treatment (1970 [1883]: 8). By
the 1880s, the horrendous living conditions of the inhabitants of the slums, noted by Mearns and other social investigators engendered a moral panic. The Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes of 1884-1885 heard evidence from numerous witnesses who confirmed that overcrowded housing conditions were also having a deleterious effect upon the health of the ‘deserving’ and ‘respectable’ classes, and the commission recommended that local authorities should be granted the power to acquire land to build houses for those displaced through slum clearance (Ravetz, 2001). A ‘star witness’ at these hearings was Octavia Hill, who promulgated her methods for the purchase and management of tenements for the ‘destructive classes’. These management techniques included immediate eviction for rent arrears and involved the surveillance and control of tenants’ conduct, through what she referred to as ‘moral training’ or ‘tremendous despotism’ (Burney, 1999: 33-34). Moreover, Hill’s management practices reiterated Victorian concerns over contagious diseases, for example, all prospective tenants and their families had to be vaccinated and agree to being moved to hospitals if subsequently infected. Octavia Hill’s managerial methods had a profound and lasting influence upon municipal housing practices and provided a framework for the new profession of housing management (Ravetz, 2001; see also Power, 1993; Whelan, 1998; Burney, 1999). For Flint (2006), contemporary housing management interventions to alleviate ASB represent the continuation of Hill’s interventionist techniques (see also Carr & Cowan, 2006).

Continuing Victorian fears over social contamination led to the Housing of the Working Class Act of 1885, which essentially codified the previous legislation from the Shaftesbury, Torrens and Cross Acts, and the City Councils of Liverpool and London utilised the legislation to build working-class tenements. The slum clearance powers (the right to construct and manage their own housing) of local authorities were further extended under ‘Part III’ of the 1890 Housing of the Working Classes Act, which consolidated all the previous housing legislation and for nearly a century was the basis of all housing law (Ravetz, 2001). Although relatively few local authorities utilised the powers granted in this Act for land acquisition and the construction of new homes, it did herald an era in which the legitimacy of state intervention into the housing problems of the working classes was not significantly politically challenged (Bedale, 1980). It has to be acknowledged however, that the detrimental living conditions inherent within the

7 For detailed insights into Octavia Hill’s philosophy and management practices in her own words, see Hill (1970).
tenements and the other forms of accommodation noted thus far, were not confined to just the poorer sections of working-class, as even regularly employed and skilled artisans lived in disgustingly insanitary conditions (Wohl, 1971).

The deleterious housing conditions of the majority of the working classes also heralded the formation of the Workmen’s National Housing Council in 1898, which rigorously campaigned for municipal housing (Damer, 1980). The Labour Party was formed by 1906 and also widely campaigned for subsidised public housing, however, as Malpass notes: ‘it is important not to over-state the impact of working-class demands at the time, but it is also important to recognize that working-class political power and influence lay with the better off, skilled and unionized workers, not with the poor’ (2005: 38 emphasis added). In summary, societal concerns over the insanitary and criminogenic housing conditions of the working-class inhabitants of cellar dwellings, lodging-houses and slum tenements facilitated the onset of housing legislation from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. For Damer however, these societal concerns were predicated upon rather spurious behavioural assumptions:

The basic premise of the discourse of the social hygienists was false: that slum-dwellers constituted a morally degenerate, criminogenic and domestically incompetent lumpenproletariat. The vast majority of slum-dwellers in Victorian Britain were very poor working-class people who wanted only one thing of their slums: out (2000: 2023 original emphasis).

The aforementioned types of accommodation were not designed specifically to house the working classes and were residual types of accommodation that were originally intended as familial homes for the wealthier classes (Burnett, 1986). The next type of accommodation in Burnett’s (1986) ‘quality hierarchy’, however, was from the outset intended for single working-class families and was called the back-to-back. The back-to-back houses were relatively inexpensive to construct and as such were meant to alleviate the dearth of available working-class housing. However, similar to the types of accommodation noted thus far, they were widely condemned by sanitary reformers for inadequate ventilation, lack of amenities, and close

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8 Trade union membership increased from 1.5 million in 1896 to 4 million by 1914 (Power, 1993: 167).
proximity to other properties in densely populated towns and cities. The back-to-back however, was popular amongst the working-classes (because it provided a structurally separate form of accommodation) for those who could afford the rent and were still being built in Leeds up to 1937. The issue of rent affordability meant that the next type of accommodation available, namely terraced houses, were a viable option for only a minority of skilled working-class artisans in the first half of the nineteenth century. Structurally, terraced housing provided far more space than the back-back and sanitation was significantly improved by individual or shared privies at the bottom of the property’s yard. Moreover, the advent of terraced housing for some members of the industrial working classes had significant social implications, for example, the rise of terraced housing signified how, for some, ‘private territory had replaced public space’ (ibid: 70).

The penultimate types of available working-class accommodation in Burnett’s ‘quality hierarchy’ were workshop houses and employer provided properties. The model villages provided by numerous industrial employers proliferated from the latter half of the nineteenth century, and by the end of the century its proponents became colloquially known as the Garden City Movement despite lacking any universal ideology (Swenarton, 1981; Ravetz, 2001). There were certain commonalities between the designs and ethos behind various forms of model villages; the homes were primarily based upon medieval villages, aimed at only the ‘deserving poor’, and managed through ‘a controlled environment of enforced respectability’9 (Malpass, 2005: 36). Nonetheless, as the First World War approached the model village became the favoured design option for the relatively few municipalities eager to build cottage estates (if finances permitted), rather than the much maligned tenements. The primary reason for the popularity of cottage estates was that with improved public transport some sections of the working classes could now inhabit the suburbs, thus alleviating overcrowding in the major cities (Ravetz, 2001). As Malpass (2005: 36) notes, this ‘filtering theory’, in which the poorer sections of the working-class were meant to inhabit the properties of those who moved to the model villages was ultimately unsuccessful because the rents on the cottage estates were too high, and

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9 According to Malpass, discipline was maintained on these cottage estates by employing ex-service personnel (2005: 36).
because the model dwellings companies failed to keep up with the proliferating housing demand engendered through increases in the urban population.

The final types of available working-class accommodation in Burnett’s (1986) ‘quality hierarchy’ were provided by various philanthropic housing schemes primarily in London. The Metropolitan Association for Improving the Dwellings of the Industrious Classes was formed in 1841 and The Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes was inaugurated in 1843. Both these organisations developed self-contained family tenements and lodging houses on a small scale but to a relatively high standard, whilst the Peabody Trust provided lower standard tenements with shared sinks and WCs for the poorer sections of the working-class. It should be recognised that a further accommodation option available to the wealthier members of working classes was home ownership through building society loans or co-operative or collective ownership schemes (Ravetz, 2001; Malpass, 2005). However, by the end of the nineteenth century ‘it was clear that the activities of philanthropic capitalism, whether or not on the part of great companies and trusts, or on the part of individuals, like Octavia Hill, had failed to reach sufficient working men [sic] or indeed, the workmen most in need of assistance’ (Wohl, 1971:40). Despite the growing realisation of the necessity for state intervention to improve the housing conditions of the working classes, from 1890-1914 less than 5 per cent of all new houses were provided by local authorities (Burnett, 1986), which equated to only 24,000 units by the start of the First World War (Cole and Furbey, 1994).

2.3 Fears of a ‘Red Dawn’: The ‘Homes Fit For Heroes’ Campaign

The First World War had profound consequences for working-class housing in Britain, firstly, the costs incurred from building significantly increased, secondly, and rather conversely, house building both ceased and proliferated simultaneously. For example, although the building programmes undertaken by local authorities came to halt during the latter half of the war, Lloyd George’s government undertook a large scale building programme to house munitions workers.

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10 The Peabody Trust was formed in 1862 with a donation from the American merchant George Peabody and by 1877 had completed 5,014 dwellings (Burnett, 1986: 177).

11 These various workers’ self-help organisations were collectively referred to as Public Utilities Societies (Malpass, 2005).
Moreover, although these homes based upon garden city designs were only intended for temporary usage some became inhabited on a permanent basis, and the munitions housing schemes of Well Hall and Gretna became the potential prototypes for future state-provided housing. The Housing (no. 2) Act of 1914 was introduced to alleviate fears regarding the cessation of building programs and the concomitant spectre of mass unemployment for the building trades. This legislation provided the Local Government Board (LGB) and the Board of Agriculture with £4 million (conditional upon agreement from the Treasury) to spend on building houses that were to be provided by public utilities societies and local authorities. This provision to combat unemployment only lasted for one year as the monetary costs of the war vastly increased and by 1916 house building by local authorities ceased, which meant that throughout the war there was a nationwide shortage of housing. The final significant events attributed to producing profound changes to the political issue of working-class housing during the war years were the rent strikes and subsequent legislation of 1915 (Swenarton, 1981; Burnett, 1986).

For Damer (1980: 74), the rent strikes by munitions workers in ‘Red Clyde side’ Glasgow and the subsequent Rent and Mortgage Restrictions Act of 1915, represented ‘a class victory for organised labour’ and were essentially the result of a nationwide campaign over housing that can be traced back to at least the mid-1880s. Moreover, this industrial action was ultimately successful because it managed to transcend the ‘typical splits of skill, sex and religion’ inherent within working-class movements (ibid: 75). The government’s Reconstruction Committee was formed in 1916 and it was immediately recognised that housing shortages during and after the war could not be alleviated through private initiatives or public utilities societies and that state intervention through local authority grants was the only viable option. By 1917, the government’s Industrial Unrest Commission had investigated the upsurge in working-class disturbances throughout the country, and alongside soaring food costs and shortages the issue of inadequate housing was deemed the most significant factor. This year also saw the appointment of Christopher Addison as the Minister of Reconstruction, and he was acutely aware that working-class agitation would be further exasperated through the mass unemployment engendered through the demobilisation of millions of troops and other wartime workers (Swenarton, 1981; Ravetz, 2001).
As the end the war approached in 1918, Cabinet fears over civil unrest and a general strike proliferated with strikes from underground workers and the police and the threat of industrial action from coal and electricity workers. The Secretary of State for Scotland called strikes over a forty-hour week by munitions workers in Glasgow a ‘Bolshevist rising’ and the government increasingly acknowledged the necessity of state housing provision to appease workers (Ravetz, 2001; Swenarton, 1981; Burnett, 1986; Power, 1993; Burney, 1999). By the time of the Armistice in 1918, concerns over the mass unemployment caused by the demobilisation of five million men (and similar amounts of women and men released from the war industries) were accompanied with political fears that these same ‘soldiers might form the military vanguard of a revolutionary movement’ (Swenarton, 1981: 78). There had been several mutinies within garrisons on either side of the channel and ex-servicemen’s organisations revealed their radical intent by boycotting the peace celebrations in 1919. On the day after of the Armistice treaty was signed, Lloyd George called a general election and promised ‘habitations fit for the heroes’ and proclaimed that ‘slums are not fit homes for the men who have won this war’. Moreover, the Parliamentary Secretary to the LGB insisted in April 1919 that ‘the money we are going to spend on housing is an insurance against Bolshevism and Revolution’ (ibid: 79). For the returning heroes of the trenches the dearth of adequate housing meant that many shared accommodation with relatives or had to reside in temporary dwellings such as caravans, shacks and railway carriages without any form of sanitation (Burnett, 1986).

The Housing and Town Planning Act and the subsequent Housing (Additional Powers) Act (the ‘Addison Acts’) of 1919 followed from the ‘Homes fit for Heroes’ campaign, and as Ravetz notes, were meant to have significant housing implications (again through ‘filtering’) for all sections of the working classes:

The revolutionary feature of the Act’s housing provisions was that they obliged all authorities to survey their districts, estimate their housing needs, and build to meet them, using the recommended standards, and the subsidies available...The new houses were both to remedy the housing shortage and set pioneering standards. The quality of the house was of equal importance to meeting the shortage; for in order to ‘provide visible proof of the irrelevance of revolution’ it needed to be superior to anything previously built for working-class occupation...It was accepted that the tenants of the new houses
would be drawn from the artisan elite, in time honoured fashion, but this addition to the housing stock would benefit everyone by releasing older accommodation. Addison passionately believed that this limited programme of garden-city houses would benefit the slum dwellers. (2001: 77)

These pioneering standards were set by the Tudor Walters Report of 1918 which proposed three types of council housing, the first and simplest design had a bath in the scullery, whereas, the second type had the bathroom on the ground floor and the WC on the first floor, whilst the best option available had both a separate WC and bathroom on the first floor. The report also set standards regarding the density of the housing estates to be built, for instance, no more than twelve homes were to be built per acre in urban locations and no more than eight per acre in rural areas. However, in reality stringent adherence to the building ideals forwarded by the Tudor Walters Committee lasted barely a year because of the necessity to build homes quickly and rising building costs (Ravetz, 2001), but the report did have a lasting effect upon the design specifications of state provided housing (Swenarton, 1981; Burnett, 1986).

Addison’s proposal for over 500,000 ‘Homes fit for Heroes’ to alleviate the post-war housing shortage never actually materialised and the building campaign had ended by 1921\(^\text{12}\). Nonetheless, the large scale provision of council housing through cottage garden estates heralded a mass exodus of the working classes from densely populated urban areas to suburban locations and ‘constituted a minor revolution in the standards of working-class housing and living’ (Burnett, 1986: 234). However, state provided housing was only available to those who could afford the rent and despite being subsidized was still higher than rents in the private sector. It was the ‘anti-slum campaign’ in the 1930s that finally heralded the onset of council housing provision for the poorer sections of the working classes (Burnett, 1986; Power, 1993; Ravetz, 2001; Malpass, 2005).

\(^{12}\) In total, 214,000 homes were built following the ‘Addison Acts’ (Ravetz, 2001).
2.4 The ‘Anti-Slum Campaign’ and the Rise of Housing Associations

It has been suggested that government attempts to eradicate the deprivation inherent within the slums (through clearance schemes) were derisory throughout the 1920s with only 15,000 homes being removed nationally (Malpass, 2005). The Special Committee of the National Housing and Town Planning Council report of 1928 noted that there were still 1,000,000 inadequate dwellings and that 2,000,000 homes were still overcrowded, and in some areas there was only one water tap and lavatory to be shared between fifty residents. Despite these horrendous environmental factors throughout the 1920s and 1930s the inhabitants of the slums, like their Victorian antecedents were similarly considered as criminally inclined, ‘undisciplined, thriftless, shiftless and intemperate’ (Burnett, 1986: 242-243) and deemed responsible for their own deprivation because of individual and familial deficiencies. Nonetheless, the ‘anti-slum campaign’ was widely disseminated through the press and speeches by the Prince of Wales and Church of England officials and became a nationwide social issue (Burnett, 1986).

The ‘anti-slum campaign’ commenced against the backdrop of global economic recession with the passing of the Labour government’s ‘Greenwood Act’ in 1930. This Housing Act made local authorities directly responsible for rehousing entire communities; empowered them to set rent levels that were attainable for even the poorest; and focus upon those inhabitants of the slums who had been previously excluded from municipal housing. During the 1930s, 500,000 homes were condemned and 300,000 slum homes demolished and approximately 4 million people were forcibly removed from the slums between 1930 and 1939 (Power, 1993). The rent subsidies and slum clearance measures introduced by the Greenwood Act, however, graphically illustrated how the inherent contradictions of public housing remained. In particular, because these rent subsidies were means tested, different rents could be charged for identical accommodation,

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13 See Martin (1935) Slums and Slummers.

14 Within the social housing literature there is certain ambiguity regarding the actual number of homes built during the period 1930-1939. For example, Power (1993) maintains that a million local authority houses were constructed under slum clearance initiatives during this period, whereas Malpass (2005) contends that only 265,000 homes were built for those displaced.
whilst the prioritising of designated slum areas meant that those not within the declared areas were excluded regardless of housing need (Ravetz, 2001).

By the 1950s, state provided housing had arguably become the ‘wobbly pillar’ that underpinned the post-war welfare state and 800,000 homes were constructed by local authorities between 1945 and 1951 (Malpass, 2003). These homes were built to alleviate the housing shortages created by war-time bombings and the concomitant continuation of slum clearance schemes, but were not constructed to the same high standards as the municipal homes built following the First World War. Nonetheless, between 1955 and 1976 approximately 1.6 million slum dwellings were demolished and this had far reaching consequences. In particular, schools, shops and local amenities became redundant following the slum clearance schemes and property values declined in inner-city locations considered too risky for investment (Power, 1993). According to Power, the process of rehousing former slum-dwellers proved to be time consuming and expensive and engendered racial and social segregation:

Racial minorities were increasingly concentrated in and around designated redevelopment areas, but they were invariably excluded from rehousing. Councils delayed certain slum clearance and redevelopment areas in order to avoid dealing with areas of immigrant concentration...The delayed areas attracted greater and greater minority populations, in ever worsening conditions, as a solution to exclusion from better areas...The blighted areas were used by councils to rehouse families from more advanced slum-clearance areas who had to be moved but were ‘unsuitable’ for new flats – generally so-called ‘problem families’. ‘Dumping’ in redevelopment areas became common from the 1960s… (1993: 195).

By the 1960s municipal councils had become the main supplier of public housing and this represented a monopoly that became increasingly challenged by those on either side of the political spectrum and heralded the gradual rise of housing associations. For Conservatives, the provision of municipal housing was incompatible with their free market philosophy, whereas some on the left berated the bureaucratic and paternalistic nature of the demolition policies that had blighted inner-city communities (McDermont, 2007). Throughout this period some sections of the media and the Conservative Party portrayed the more affluent and ‘respectable’ council
tenants as ‘limpets’ who occupied subsidised housing to the detriment of those in genuine housing need (Jacobs et al. 2003).

As for housing associations, the National Federation of Housing Societies (NFHS) was formed in 1935 and became the representative body of housing associations within England; this organisation later became the National Federation of Housing Associations in 1973 and in 1996 became known as the National Housing Federation (NHF). The NFHS was inaugurated through funding provided by the Housing Act of 1935, but the suggestion forwarded by the Moyne Committee of 1933 for a central funding agency for housing association building schemes was vehemently opposed by both private builders and local authorities. Moreover, housing associations had to wait until the Housing Act of 1974 for legislation that would later enable them to become significant providers of accommodation within the social housing sector. Essentially, the 1974 Housing Act made the housing association sector into the “third arm” of government housing policy by establishing a new regulatory framework. In particular, housing associations had to now register with a state regulator (the Housing Corporation) to be eligible for funding, and in exchange for their previous right to dispose of their properties as they had wished now received access to public funds, loans and subsidies. This funding heralded the proliferation of housing association stock from 200,000 dwellings in 1970 to 519,000 dwellings by 1989 (McDermont, 2007).

This increase in housing association properties has also seen a concomitant decline in local authority housing stock. For example, in 1987 over 90 per cent of social housing in Britain was still owned by local authorities, however, by 2003 they owned approximately two thirds of the nation’s social housing stock (Malpass, 2005). According to McDermont (2004), the continuing rise in housing association stock is unsurprising because housing associations announced their utility for the creation of communities ‘long before the re-emergence of community as a dominant political discourse’ (ibid: 858). Since their nineteenth century inception as voluntary organisations housing associations have used allocation policies and tenancy agreements to determine who will be included or excluded from their communities and as such have formalised the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor dichotomy. Moreover, these allocation policies have become a social control mechanism by engendering governable space for their selected tenants (ibid).
2.5 Managing the Estates: Through the ‘Respectable/Rough’ Dichotomy

Housing management as a profession is often historically located from the mid-nineteenth century onwards and its inception is primarily attributed to the interventionist management practices of Octavia Hill (Power, 1993; Burney, 1999; Ravetz, 2001). Prior to this period solicitors were employed by private landlords to manage their properties, however, the central tenet and originality of Hill’s approach was the relationship she maintained with both tenants and landlords, in which, she imposed the ‘values of thrift, good housekeeping and Christian morality’ upon both parties (Clapham, 1997: 763; Whelan, 1998). For Damer (2000: 2010), the moralistic rationale behind the rising profession of housing management in the Victorian era was primarily based upon the state’s necessity to ‘infiltrate’ and ‘discipline’ the proliferating working classes. Damer’s overtly Marxist interpretation of the profession of housing management, however, does acknowledge that Hill’s methods were always contested by other middle-class urban professionals, and that the working classes themselves were far from passive recipients of these forms of social control.

Nevertheless, by the time of her death in 1912, Hill had renovated and managed 15,000 properties (Power, 1993) and her housing management practices were adopted by the Octavia Hill Club and the Association of Women Housing Property Managers, which were both formed in 1916, and by 1932 had merged to become the Society of Women Housing Estate Managers (SWHEM). Moreover, SWHEM utilised Hill’s methods to promote the professional status of its members and opposed the relegation of ‘women to the “social work” side of housing management’, but later merged in 1965 with the Institute of Housing (IOH) to become the Institute of Housing Managers 15(Whelan, 1998: 27-28). Hill’s management practices were also adopted in Manchester, Glasgow 16 and extensively throughout Europe, and the female staff that she had previously trained managed munitions estates during the First World War, and by the

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15 For Whelan (1998), this was more of a takeover by the male dominated IOH than a merger and in 1975 the Institute of Housing Managers reverted back to its original name the Institute of Housing.

16 In Glasgow, early housing managers were referred to as Factors and alongside Nurse Inspectresses utilised intrusive methods of discipline and surveillance upon the public-sector tenants that were re-housed following slum clearances in the inter-war years, and these practices continued until the 1950s (Damer, 2000).
1920s the Addison estates in Rotherham and Chesterfield employed female managers directly trained in her methods (Ravetz, 2001).

According to Ravetz (2001:112-113), there were a number of factors that ‘militated against the wholesale adoption of the Hill style of management’ by the local authorities responsible for the provision of municipal housing. In Hill’s method the optimum amount of dwellings on estates per manager was approximately 300, whereas the mass provision of council housing following the First World War meant that some estates had over 2,000 dwellings. Moreover, a further militating factor was the institutional practices of the local authorities themselves. Local authorities had departments with male surveyors, treasurers and maintenance staff who all considered estate management as part of their overall remit, which invariably meant that the welfare of tenants was undertaken by women whilst the more technical roles were undertaken by male managers. For Clapham (1997), however, the female proponents of Hill’s methods were far more influential within early housing associations.

This gendered process within early housing management was particularly evident during the slum clearance schemes of the 1930s onwards and exemplified within the IOH (formed in 1931), for example, the IOH wanted female workers on every estate to instruct tenants on matters of cleanliness. The Central Housing Advisory Committee for the Ministry of Health (CHAC) similarly maintained it was female staff that had the aptitude ‘to convert families to the right frame of mind for consenting to the cleansing of bedding and furniture and the destruction when necessary of vermin-infested articles’ (CHAC, 1938, cited by Ravetz, 2001:113 emphasis added). These concerns over the hygiene practices and ‘respectability’ of former slum inhabitants were also raised by council housing managers and invariably focused upon the domestic inadequacies of the ‘problem mother’ and her anti-social ‘problem family’ (Starkey, 2000; Taylor and Rogaly, 2007). Following the mass evacuation of urban children during the Second World War, the Our Towns report by the Women’s Group on Public Welfare introduced the term ‘problem family’ to encompass:

...the continuation of a ‘submerged tenth’, a ‘hidden sore’, ‘poor, dirty and crude in its habits’, consisting of families ‘always on the edge of pauperism and crime, riddled with mental and physical defects, in and out of the courts for child neglect,
A mena to the community of which the gravity is out of all proportion to their numbers’ (Women’s Group on Public Welfare, 1943, cited by Hall, 1960: 157).

A cursory review of the ‘problem family’ literature from the 1950s through to the 1970s reveals that these families were largely attributed with having the following characteristics: low socio-economic status; poor mental and physical health; poor housing; marital discord; and tendencies for child neglect and criminality (Welshman, 1999; see also Philp and Timms, 1957).

Essentially, these research findings were rather ‘tautological’ and dependent upon how such families had previously been defined (Rutter and Madge, 1976: 247). It has been suggested however, that despite the plethora of reports published between 1940 and 1970 regarding the ‘problem family’ there was a dearth of knowledge about the actual families themselves, and that more contemporary debates regarding the ‘underclass’ are indicative of the power of notions of social pathology and seemingly suggest that the issue of the ‘problem family’ is far from redundant (Welshman, 1999: 458, 473; Macnicol, 1999). Indeed, the continuous articulation of the ‘problem family’ as the progenitor of juvenile criminality and anti-social behaviour was also far from redundant for criminological and psychological academics, and has engendered an ‘exhaustive examination’ through longitudinal research (Burney and Gelsthorge, 2008: 32).

For Farrington and Welsh (2007), one of the most salient findings from the considerable information accumulated from the plethora of longitudinal research is that criminal and antisocial parents tend to have delinquent and antisocial children (see West & Farrington, 1973; Wadsworth, 1979; West, 1982; Kolvin et al., 1990; Farrington, 1995; Johnson et al., 2004; inter alia). Moreover, they suggest that there are six not mutually exclusive and probable explanations for the intergenerational transmission of criminality within particular families. Firstly, a combination of multiple risk factors such as deprivation, parental discord, poor parenting, large family size, and parental criminality engenders antisocial and criminal tendencies in children, which are then passed on from one generation to the next. The second explanation for intergenerational criminality and antisocial behaviour focuses upon assortative mating, in which

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17 It has been suggested that arguably the most influential expression of the intergenerational transmission of criminality (through irresponsible parenting) theme can be located in the psychoanalytic ‘maternal deprivation’ studies undertaken by John Bowlby (1946, 1965), during and after the Second World War (Goldson and Jamieson, 2002).
male offenders marry or cohabit with female offenders, for example, if both parents have attained criminal convictions then their children are raised disproportionately antisocial. The detrimental criminal influence of other family members (primarily co-offending with male siblings) is also considered in the third explanation. However, the Cambridge Study in Delinquent Development\textsuperscript{18} (West and Farrington, 1973; West, 1982; Farrington, 1995) found no evidence that parents supported their children’s criminal activities and offending fathers did not condone their children’s criminality.

Significantly, the fourth explanation forwarded focuses upon how the influence of criminal parents upon their children’s offending is environmentally mediated. For example, the Cambridge Study found that inadequate parental supervision was inextricably linked to the transmission of criminality between fathers and sons (Farrington and Welsh, 2007; see also Wilson, 1980, 1987). The fifth explanation for the intergenerational transmission of criminality and antisocial behaviour considers genetic factors, whereas, the sixth suggests that criminality and antisocial behaviour within certain families continues because of bias towards such families from criminal justice officials (Farrington and Welsh, 2007). This institutional bias towards problematic families is also evident within housing management ‘and has occurred on the grounds of class, “race” and gender, and has been mediated largely through ideologies of respectability’ (Somerville, 1998: 773-774).

Since the large scale slum clearance schemes of the 1930s onwards tenants from outside the ‘respectable’ classes had been re-housed by local authorities (Ravetz, 2001; Malpass, 2005). A small minority of these problematic populations, although considered as ‘beyond reclamation’ were also ‘a permanent charge upon the benevolence of the community and must be cared for’, if their deficiencies were not to be passed to future generations (CHAC, 1938, cited by Ravetz, 2001: 116). A report by CHAC on \textit{Unsatisfactory Tenants} in 1955 estimated that approximately 0.1 per cent of the 2.5 million council tenants had been evicted. The primary reasons for these evictions were (in descending order) rent arrears, neglecting property and causing a nuisance to neighbours. However, eviction was perceived as a last resort and the ‘close management’ and

\textsuperscript{18} As West (one of the Cambridge Study researchers) astutely notes, the sampling of only primarily white working-class boys and their families for this longitudinal study: ‘tell us nothing about delinquency in the middle classes or about delinquency among girls or among immigrant groups’ (1982: 8).
‘treatment’ of the families involved was the preferred option forwarded by the committee (Burney, 1999: 40; Taylor and Rogaly, 2007).

This enduring distinction between ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ council tenants was not only forwarded by housing managers but also by the inhabitants of the estates themselves. Skilled manual workers and their families considered themselves more respectable than their unskilled counterparts because of gendered behavioural factors. For instance, ‘respectability’ for men was signified by hard work, respect for authority and sobriety, whereas for women the upkeep of a tidy home was the main criterion. However, the lives of those considered as ‘roughs’ were characterised through violence, criminality and the drinking habits of the men and the inadequate housekeeping practices of the women (Watt, 2006). Those considered as ‘substandard tenants’ had their housekeeping practices monitored and if these were deemed inadequate by housing managers warning letters threatening eviction were issued. Moreover, all council tenants had to adhere to certain rules regarding the upkeep and maintenance of their homes. In particular, windows had to be cleaned on a fortnightly basis and the internal decoration of the property was the responsibility of the local authority up to the beginning of the Second World War (Ravetz, 2001). The rules and regulations for council tenants were provided through tenancy agreement handbooks that offered ‘condescending advice on how to undertake housework and rear children’ (Cole and Furbey, 1994: 139). It will become apparent in the findings chapters of this thesis that the monitoring and judgement of housekeeping practices has remained a significant element of contemporary TFP interventions.

According to Ravetz (2001: 129), although these articulations exemplify how early housing management represented a process of ‘[moral] regulation, education and control’, the management practices that had the most profound effect upon the evolution of council housing were selection and allocation procedures. Originally, the selection of council tenants was undertaken by local councillors who followed the advice of housing managers, however, these decisions were prone to allegations of corruption and by 1949 the selection process was carried out solely by local authority housing officers. For prospective tenants there were several stages

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19 These rules regarding the maintenance and upkeep of council properties meant that some tenants could only hang pictures on the rails provided and had to use a specified hook, and this ridiculously meant that they required written consent if they wanted to use a larger nail (Ravetz, 2001)
that had to be overcome before they received the offer of a tenancy. Some measure of priority had to be established and this excluded from council waiting lists single persons, unwed couples, married couples without children, those with previous rent arrears, and conversely very large families. A further criterion that had to be satisfied to receive a council tenancy was that prospective tenants required some form of local connection and this meant that ethnic minorities were often excluded. For those fortunate enough to be admitted to a council waiting list the chance of receiving a tenancy depended on both the applicant’s level of priority and housing availability. The extent of the applicant’s priority was determined by various ‘weighting’ or ‘points’ schemes that were awarded to prospective tenants because of overcrowding, insanitary conditions or more general medical conditions (Ravetz, 2001: 129-131).

The application process for those who inhabited slum clearance areas however, was even more problematic. Former slum dwellers did not receive the same legal entitlements as ordinary applicants and single persons, subtenants and lodgers could all be excluded from the rehousing process. Furthermore, even those who successfully rose to the apex of the housing waiting list had few choices in the accommodation they were offered and this had a ‘direct impact on the social structure of estates’ (Ravetz, 2001: 132). For instance, local authorities had a diverse range of housing stock and to safeguard the better properties placed those who regularly paid their rent on the most desirable estates. Moreover, for those considered as undesirable and disruptive tenants, housing managers adopted two strategies. One such strategy was to place ‘like with like’ and place unruly tenants together on the same estates which risked the formation of ghettos, whereas the other strategy placed such tenants throughout the estates and adjacent to ‘ordinary’ households that were more accepting of problematic neighbours (Tucker, 1966). For either strategy to be successful certain applicants were coerced towards accepting inferior properties, especially those who had formally inhabited the slums. Nonetheless, all prospective council tenants required assessment prior to allocation and this was undertaken through ‘grading’ by a housing visitor who established not only the applicant’s degree of need, but also became a ‘spying operation on people’s domestic standards’ (Ravetz, 2001: 133).

A CHAC (1969) report on housing administration (the Cullingworth Committee) noted with alarm the continuation of the divisive practices inherent within allocation procedures, and how these practices were primarily based on notions of social and moral conformity and the ability to
pay rent (Cole and Furbey, 1994). The Cullingworth report also noted that ‘unmarried mothers, cohabitees, “dirty” families and transients tended to be grouped together as “undesirable”’ by housing managers, and that the stigmatising assessments by housing visitors left ‘too much scope for personal prejudice and unconscious bias’ (CHAC, 1969, Cited by Burney, 1999: 45). Moreover, the report called for the grading of prospective tenants by housekeeping standards to be abolished and that housing need should be the only selection criteria, however, the practice of assessing applicant’s suitability through home visitation was still being forwarded as the preferred option within housing management literature up until the early 1980s (Burney, 1999). Academic research into the allocation practices of housing managers (see Philips, 1985; Henderson & Karn, 1987) similarly found the distinction between ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ tenants and that the former were placed on the more problematic estates (Murie, 1997; Somerville, 1998).

According to Power (1993), it was the passing of The Homeless Persons’ Act (1977) however, that radically changed the council allocation system. In particular, people classed as in priority need (adults with dependent children, children leaving care, pregnant women, the mentally ill or elderly) or unintentionally homeless were now entitled to local authority housing, however, young, single people were still excluded and many had to live on the streets As Ravetz (2001) perceptively notes, although evidence suggests that housing managers used socially divisive biases in their selection and allocation practices, this does not mean they ‘invented or deliberately engineered the social hierarchies they had to work with’ (ibid: 135). Moreover, it was primarily the end of the expansion of council housing that ultimately highlighted the institutional failings of housing management to confront the socio-economic problems inherent within the public housing sector.
CHAPTER 3

Framing Contemporary Housing ‘Problems’: From ‘Sink Estates’ and the ‘Right to Buy’ initiatives to FIPs and the TFP.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will continue on from the preceding one and will primarily concentrate on the significant pieces of housing legislation from the advent of Conservative governments in 1979, through to New Labour’s election victory in 1997 until their defeat in 2010. The chapter will then consider the policies of the Coalition and subsequent Conservative government of the contemporary era. As such, this chapter will culminate with a more orthodox review of the relevant literature in regards to contemporary housing interventions to alleviate ASB and the discursive shift from ‘problem’ to ‘troubled’ families, and will situate my research into the parent/s’ experiences of being threatened with eviction and/or evicted. However, in order to situate these significant pieces of housing legislation it will commence with a consideration of the socio-political perceptions of the more problematic council estates since approximately the 1960s. The extended conclusion to this chapter will draw together the significant themes from this and the preceding chapter, highlighting the enduring history of social control within the social housing sector.

3.2 Mum’s the Word: Locating the ‘Underclass’

It has been suggested that the council estates of the interwar and post war periods primarily contained the more affluent and ‘respectable’ members of the working classes and were not associated with criminality and an array of social problems. Moreover, the neighbourhood relations on the more affluent and respectable estates were based upon familial and work place networks with both formal and informal processes of social control. Criminality and the dearth of social cohesion were associated instead with inner city ‘problem estates’ and the former inhabitants of the slums (Murie, 1997; Hanley, 2007). By the late 1960s however, various appellations were used to encompass the more problematic council areas such as ‘difficult to let’, ‘peripheral’, ‘sink’ or ‘problem estate’ and housing managers now focused upon whole estates
rather than the ‘problem tenant’ of previous eras (Ravetz, 2001; Card, 2006). It became apparent that some of the new estates were similarly problematic and this attracted considerable and sustained academic scrutiny (Papps, 1998; Burney, 1999).

As Papps (1998) notes, Morris (1958) contended that the problems were attributable to housing allocation policies that had exacerbated the ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ dichotomy and because former slum inhabitants had taken their sub-cultural norms to their new locations (see also Bottoms and Xanthos, 1981). Furthermore, various research into the criminogenic characteristics of ‘problem estates’ noted the contribution that an enduring bad reputation has played in the intensification of social control within these locations (see Wilson, 1963; Armstrong & Wilson, 1973; Baldwin, 1974; Damer, 1974; Gill, 1977; Hastings & Dean, 2003; Watt, 2006). In particular, for Armstrong and Wilson (1973), when a ‘problem estate’ attracted a deviant label, both anti-social behaviour by inhabitants and levels of police intervention become amplified.

The detrimental consequences of these labelling and stereotyping processes were similarly observed by Campbell’s (1993) study of inner-city estates that had experienced rioting by mainly white youths in the early 1990s. For Campbell (1993), the explanations forwarded to account for the outbreaks of disorder on some inner-city estates were primarily predicated upon the amalgamation of two theoretical assumptions, those of the ‘underclass’ and ‘defensible space’ respectively. As regards the former, the distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor or the ‘apocalyptic variation of the underclass thesis’ has been reiterated throughout every decade of the twentieth century and forwarded by commentators on either side of the political divide (Walker, 1996; Morris, 1994; Lister, 1996). However, for the American neo-conservative Charles Murray (1996a, 1996b, 1996c), the long British distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor had lessened by the 1960s and was the corollary of over generous welfare interventions. Murray suggested there are essentially three primary indicators of the emerging British ‘underclass’ or future ‘New Rabble’; illegitimacy, crime and economic inactivity which were all exacerbated through welfare dependency in the late 1980s and beyond (Haworth and Manzi, 1999). In particular, Murray’s cultural thesis (Young, 1999) portrayed

20 Between 1991 and 1995 twenty eight ‘disturbances’ on British council estates were counted (Power & Tunstall, 1997).
young single mothers as ‘formative members’ of the ‘underclass’, who reproduce sons without positive male role models who have a predilection for crime and drugs, whilst their female counterparts ‘repeat the cycle of promiscuity and dependency’ (Duncan et al., 1999: 240; Carabine, 2001).

It has been suggested that although Murray never invented the term the ‘underclass’ (Lister, 1996) he inextricably linked primarily white British youth with the ‘imagined’ existence of a ‘dangerous class’ (Dean, 1997: 55; see also Macdonald, 1997; Young, 1999; Haylett, 2000), and located ‘this new category of social life’ within council estates (Taylor, 1999: 113). Murray (2001) later maintained that the under-socialization of Britain’s children had proliferated, and was the consequence of familial breakdown and because illegitimacy remained primarily a lower-class problem. The high profile and disastrous Conservative government’s ‘back to basics’ campaign of the early 1990s, and the infidelity of the then Prime Minister, John Major (see Jordan, 1999), however, would seemingly suggest that familial discord is not specific to ‘lower’ working-class communities.

There are also a multitude of conceptual, empirical and policy based critiques (see Morris 1994; Adcock, 1996; Brown, 1996; Deakin, 1996; Walker, 1996; Macdonald, 1997; Philips, 2001), and counter-critiques of Murray’s ‘underclass’ contentions (see Buckingham, 1996; Murray, 1996b, 1996c, 2001). Nonetheless, Murray’s variant of the ‘underclass’ thesis retained a pervasive influence over New Labour’s social policy agenda because their conceptualisations of ‘social exclusion’ were imbued with ‘remnants of the underclass discourse’ (Skeggs, 2005: 87; Watt, 2008). New Labour’s association with, and focus upon social exclusion, will be returned to later in this chapter. The pervasive influence of ‘underclass’ discourses was particularly evident within social housing policies and rhetoric, for instance, although the less pejorative terms of ‘residualisation’ and ‘social exclusion’ are employed; they have similar connotations to the concept of the ‘underclass’ by focusing upon marginalised populations requiring intervention (Somerville, 1998; Haworth and Manzi, 1999; Jacobs et al., 2003; Card, 2001, 2006). For Hunter and Nixon (2001), more contemporary debates and housing policy interventions regarding ASB and ‘neighbours from hell’ (see Field, 2003) are intimately linked to Murray’s berating of lone motherhood.
The latter theoretical assumption within Campbell’s (1993) amalgamation premise, the theory of ‘defensible space’, was originally forwarded in Newman’s (1972) research into municipal housing in New York. According to Newman, failures in planning and design had made municipal housing dangerous and prone to gangs and criminality, and he called for improved designs (defensible space) that would enhance safety and promote vigilance amongst the residents. For Campbell there were similarities between black ghettos in the United States and British riots in the 1980s, and she suggested that the infamous Broadwater Farm estate in London represents a prime exemplar of ‘indefensible space’ (ibid: 315). Moreover, according to Power, the amalgamation of the theories of the ‘underclass’ and ‘defensible space’ were also underpinned by the familiar historical theme of blaming inadequate mothering for the criminogenic actions of men:

Behind these were the external themes of discipline and punishment, sexuality, legitimacy and wedlock – or, put another way, motherhood and the fatherless family. Neither sexuality nor style created mass unemployment or the so-called underclass. They were not to blame. But in the mind of the old respectability and the New Right it was not mass unemployment that was to blame for the underclass, it was manners and mothers...in short, it did not see a masculine response to an economic crisis – it saw instead the failure of the mothers to manage the men\(^{21}\) (1993: 302-303 original emphasis)

According to Murie (1997), the association between council housing and criminality attracted further academic interest after the British Crime Survey (BCS) findings of 1988. The BCS found that council tenants had double the risk of being a victim of burglary than owner occupiers and that the problems of litter, noise and graffiti were more often referred to by respondents from council estates. As Murie further notes, Taylor (1995) considered poverty as the primary reason for the inherent problems on some council estates, for example, many large estates are on the

\(^{21}\) As Carabine’s genealogical analysis of the discourses surrounding lone motherhood (1830-1990) has found, although these have been historically specific, ‘certain themes – the unacceptability of unmarried motherhood, lone motherhood as moral, social, and/or economic issue, as a threat (to family, nation, society) – reappear, albeit in different forms in different times’ (2001: 273-274; see also Wilson and Huntington, 2005).
borders of cities, experience high levels of unemployment, have a dearth of local amenities, and these structural factors intensify the pressure upon familial and community relationships.

From the early 1970s onwards policies were developed to alleviate urban deprivation and poverty through Community Development Projects (CDPs). The CDP workers, however, refuted the notion that urban deprivation was engendered through the practices of the residents themselves and maintained that ‘the vast majority were ordinary working-class men and women who, through forces outside their control, happened to be living in areas where bad housing conditions, redundancies, lay-offs, and low wages were commonplace’ (CDP, 1977, cited by Papps, 1998: 644). Nonetheless, these structural considerations were still largely omitted from government housing policy and the focus instead became the practices of local authority housing managers and the tenants themselves through the inauguration of Priority Estate Projects (PEPs) (Papps, 1998).

The PEP initiatives commenced in 1979 and were predicated upon the reorientation of resources rather than increased spending and aimed to directly involve tenants in the decision-making processes on their estates and involved the following steps: making the estate a financial and organizational entity; the placing of local offices on the estate; consultation with tenants; preventing the ‘dumping’ of problematic tenants to alleviate anti-social behaviour; the enforcement of tenancy agreements; targeted budgets for repairs; training for staff and tenants’ representatives and the utilisation of other services to improve socio-economic conditions (Power, 1993: 224-225). As Papps (1998) notes, a study undertaken of twenty PEP estates by Power and Tunstall (1995) found these estates still remained unpopular and prone to economic inactivity, crime and disorder, and the authors called for the more intensive management of these locations. Moreover, the necessity for more intensive housing management within the PEP estates was similarly forwarded by Home Office-sponsored research (see Foster & Hope, 1993). According to Clapham (1997), the call for more intensive housing management on ‘problem estates’ since the early 1980s has concomitantly enhanced the surveillance function of estate managers. A report by the Housing Advisory Group for the DoE on Security on Council Estates (HSAG, 1980), recommended closer ties with the police, the usage of CCTV, and the presence of housing officers on the estates so: ‘anti-social behaviour can be noted and, where necessary, parents or the police can be informed of wrong-doers’ (HSAG, 1980, cited by Clapham, 1997:
It should be acknowledged however, that the proliferation of ‘problem estates’ is not only an issue of housing management, but also due to a long term process of residualisation within the social housing sector (Papps, 1998).

By the time of the 1979 Conservative election victory approximately one-third of households in Britain occupied local authority housing, which equated to some six million council properties (Cole and Furbey, 1994). However, by 1996 some two million dwellings had been removed from the local authority housing stock through the Conservative government’s ‘right to buy’ initiatives (Ravetz, 2001). Since the 1950s successive governments had promoted the proliferation of home ownership, however, the issue was to become a flagship policy during the Conservatives 1979 election campaign and subsequent victory. This ‘quintessentially Thatcherite policy’ (Malpass, 2005: 110) was introduced in the 1980 Housing Act and gave tenants of more than three years the right to buy their homes at discounted prices. For example, the discounts started at 33 per cent of the market value and could rise to 50 per cent for tenants of twenty years or more, and were later increased to up to 60 per cent for houses and 70 per cent for flats. It should be recognised that the ‘respectable’ tenants who primarily exercised their right to buy and received maximum discounts were male, middle aged, skilled manual workers with an adult family, who purchased houses rather than flats (Malpass, 2005). For Tyler (2013a:160), under Thatcher, social housing estates in Britain were perceived as the breeding ground for ‘a parasitical dysfunctional underclass of failed citizens’ and this ‘pathologization of the council estate’ was used to justify the ‘right-to-buy’ initiatives.

The privatisation of council housing through the right to buy initiatives facilitated the increasing residualisation of the public housing sector (Cole and Furbey, 1994; Burney, 1999; Ravetz, 2001; Malpass, 2005). According to Malpass (2005), the term residualisation (derived from social policy literature) entered academic housing literature in the late 1970s and was given a poignant and early interpretation by Harloe. For Harloe, public housing was destined to become a type of ‘ambulance service concentrating its effort on the remaining areas of housing stress and dealing with a variety of “special needs” such as the poor, the homeless, one parent families, battered wives and blacks’ (Harloe, 1978, cited by Malpass 2005: 114). A more apposite interpretation of residualisation process is forwarded by Cole and Furbey (1994: 198) and refers to a reduction in
the size of the tenure and ‘the concentration of social and economic disadvantage on council estates and the political marginalisation of council tenants’.

Although the latter charge of political marginalisation is difficult to evaluate, the reference to socio-economic disadvantage is evident in the social composition of council estates. For example, the elderly, single parents, young and African-Caribbean households all became over-represented in the municipal housing sector, whereas the proportion of middle-aged households declined. Moreover, in 1962 only 11 per cent of public housing tenants had no earned income, but by 1982 this figure had tripled to 44 per cent (Malpass, 2005). The residualisation process intensified not only because of the Conservative’s ‘right-to-buy’ initiatives, but also from the previous Labour government and the Homeless Persons Act of 1977, in which those who were previously excluded from council housing received a statutory right to housing if they were unintentionally homeless. This legal obligation meant that local authorities now had significantly ‘less power to filter out potentially disruptive households’ (Burney, 1999: 48).

For the ‘New Right’ inspired Conservative government (1979-1997), council housing not only personified the failings of a profligate public sector monopoly it was also socially divisive, inadequately managed, and ultimately negated consumer choice. The inefficiency of the public housing sector was not only considered in fiscal terms but also covered management and allocation procedures. For instance, local authority housing stock was considered inefficiently managed because of a dearth of incentives for staff to reduce rent arrears, fill vacant housing stock and speed up the lettings process. As for the negation of consumer choice in public housing, the Conservatives maintained that the design and management of state housing was dominated by bureaucracy and housing managers had no discernible accountability to their tenants (Cole and Furbey, 1994; Ravetz, 2001).

The issue of accountability was addressed through the introduction of the Tenants’ Charter in 1980. This legislation (introduced in the 1980 Housing Act) codified certain ‘rights’ for council tenants such as the security of tenure, the right to exchange tenancies, the right for information and consultation, the right to have lodgers, sublet, undertake improvements and pass their tenancies to relatives or other members of their household (Ravetz, 2001). Significantly, the security of tenure right meant that local authority tenants now had the same legal protection as those in the private sector and council landlords now required a court order to evict problematic
tenants for breaching tenancy agreements. Moreover, the grounds for eviction were stated in the statute and although nuisance behaviour and using the home for criminal reasons were included the eviction process was slow and expensive (Burney, 1999). According to Haworth and Manzi (1999), the Tenants’ Charter also highlighted the dilemma faced by contemporary housing managers concerned with both the control and empowerment of an ‘underclass’ of council tenants, moreover, the wording of tenancy agreements not only exemplify discourses of social control, but also define the functions of housing management itself (see also Lister, 2006).

The issue of greater accountability was further addressed with the passing of the 1988 Housing Act: ‘Tenants’ Choice’, which granted private landlords the right to manage estates through voluntary transfer schemes and tenants the right to veto the transfers. For the Conservatives, housing associations would now become the new social landlords (presently colloquially known as Registered Social Landlords, RSLs) at the expense of the inefficient municipalities. These large scale voluntary transfers (LSVTs) meant that housing associations were now responsible for problematic former council estates and by 1997 one in seven of their tenants had rent arrears and approximately 80 per cent of their households had young children and no working adult (Ravetz, 2001). As Ginsburg (2005) notes, the privatisation of council housing both continued and proliferated under the New Labour administration, for example, in 1979 nearly a third of homes in England were being rented from local authorities but by the year 2000 this figure had dropped to only 14 per cent. For Page (1993: 4), housing association estates (built since the early 1990s) also contained residents with ‘a worrying imbalance’ of socio-economic problems, which could be rectified (balanced) through allocation policies that would ensure a more diverse range of households. As Haworth and Manzi (1997: 162-163) note however, Page’s suggestions for a ‘balanced community’ for the poor are premised upon the spurious notions of communal homogeneity and social cohesion and put housing managers at the vanguard of attempts to control marginalised groups. Nevertheless, the necessity for more ‘balanced’ or ‘sustainable’ communities was to be further reiterated in political rhetoric following New Labour’s election victory in 1997 (Card, 2001).

3.3 The 1996 Housing Act

The primary reasons for dedicating a sub-section of this chapter to a single piece of housing legislation is because the 1996 Housing Act placed concerns over ASB within the remit of
housing law, was a ‘dramatic departure’ from previous housing legislation, and was aimed exclusively at council tenants (Brown, 1999: 75; Crawford, 2003, 2009). The media coverage of the riots on some British council estates in the early 1990s, and concomitant concerns that the police were powerless to protect communities (because of a dearth of witnesses and resources) from an ‘underclass’ of abusive and violent tenants ensured that local authorities increasingly sought more stringent legal remedies to address the issue of ASB\(^\text{22}\) (Papps, 1998; Burney, 1999; Card, 2006), and speed up possession proceedings (Scott and Parkey, 1998; Burney, 2000). The Social Landlords: Crime and Nuisance Group (SLCNG) was formed in 1995 and rigorously campaigned for greater powers to combat ASB, and was ultimately successful with the passing of the 1996 Housing Act (Burney, 2000; Carr and Cowan, 2006).

The 1996 Housing Act contained the following three measures to alleviate ASB within the social housing sector: introductory/probationary tenancies, new forms of injunction, and extended grounds for possession (Hunter \textit{et al}., 2005). According to Hunter (2006), the provision of introductory/probationary tenancies meant that local authorities could grant introductory tenancies (lasting for a probationary period of 12 months and converting to a secure tenancy if no possession proceedings had commenced) to new tenants rather than a secure tenancy. This essentially means that introductory tenants have less legal protection than secure tenants and as such ‘control over the eviction process is put in the hands of the landlord’ (ibid: 139). For example, the landlord only has to give notice of their intention to end the tenancy and this can only be challenged through an internal review procedure rather than through a court hearing where evidence is required. Moreover, if the landlord has followed the internal review procedure properly the court will have to grant possession to the landlord. The legal framework for housing association tenants is different primarily because fully assured tenancies are generally granted and if housing associations wish to alter fully assured tenancies permission from the Housing Corporation is required.

However, in 1995 two housing associations in Manchester gained permission from the Housing Corporation to introduce assured shorthold or starter tenancies on their troublesome estates (see

\(^\text{22}\) The Chartered Institute of Housing provides a rather consensual definition of ASB as ‘behaviour that opposes society’s norms and accepted standards of behaviour’ (CIH, 1995, cited by Card, 2001, p. 209).
Ruggieri & Levison, 1998). This meant that the security of tenure lasts for a minimum of six months and that the landlords can evict their problematic tenants after serving only a two month notice period. In 2003/04 the number of local authorities granting introductory tenancies was approximately 35 per cent, however, there were regional variations with 75 per cent of local authorities in the North East utilising introductory tenancy schemes compared with 12 per cent of local authorities in the Eastern region (Hunter, 2006: 139-140).

Research into introductory tenancies by Nixon et al., (1999) significantly found that despite being developed to alleviate ASB, 68 per cent of evictions from introductory tenancy schemes were for rent arrears and only 19 per cent were for nuisance behaviour. As Haworth and Manzi note, the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) warned that introductory tenancies would engender ‘further polarisation along tenure lines’ because ‘[council] tenants have to prove that they deserve a settled home unlike families in other tenures’ (CIH, 1995, cited by Haworth and Manzi, 1999: 161). The usage of court possession proceedings by local authority landlords also increased by 127 per cent between 1996 and 1998, and 65 per cent of these court cases resulted in possession orders (Hunter, 2006). This court process and the use of eviction by social landlords to curtail ASB is also a highly gendered phenomenon (Hunter et al., 1999; Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Nixon and Hunter, 2009). For instance, as Nixon and Hunter (2009) note, Hunter et al., (1999), analysed 67 nuisance case files from ten social landlords and concomitantly examined Court of Appeal ASB cases, and found that over 50 per cent of landlord cases pertained to female-headed households and that the majority of these were lone-parents. Moreover, these women were being held accountable for the ASB of male relatives and partners:

Critically, in both sets of data, in two out of three cases, the complaints focused not on the women’s behaviour but rather on her inability to control the behaviour of teenage (mostly male) children and/or the violent and disruptive behaviour of male partners (Nixon and Hunter, 2009: 119; see also Hunter and Nixon, 2001).

As for the new forms of injunction, the 1996 Housing Act granted local authorities the power to utilise injunctions in cases where the perpetrators (tenants and non-tenants) used violence or the threat of violence, and also contained the power of arrest if the injunction was breached (Hunter, 2000, Hunter et al., 2005). This new emphasis on both tenant and non-tenant behaviour was also
evident in the provision for extended grounds for possession. For example, the 1996 Housing Act changed the previous grounds for possession by including the nuisance behaviour of visitors to the premises. This behaviour included conduct ‘likely to be a nuisance’ which essentially meant it was unnecessary to prove that anyone had actually suffered from the nuisance behaviour. Moreover, this nuisance behaviour did not only have to affect neighbours but also those ‘residing, visiting or otherwise engaging in a lawful activity in the locality’. The grounds for possession also included being convicted of an offence ‘committed in, or in the locality of, the dwelling house’ and ‘using the dwelling-house or allowing it to be used for immoral or illegal purposes’ (Section 144 of the 1996 Housing Act, cited by Carr and Cowan, 2006: 66).

As Card (2001) notes, although local authorities have always had the power to deny applicants from their housing register for behavioural reasons, this has proliferated since Part VI of the 1996 Housing Act gave more discretion to local authorities wishing to exclude certain applicants because of previous ASB. Research undertaken by the housing charity Shelter (see Smith et al., 2001) found that since the 1996 Housing Act 46 per cent of the RSLs and local authorities surveyed had amended their exclusions policies, and 47.7 per cent of these excluded applicants on the basis of previous behaviour. These exclusionary policies are important because guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment (DoE) in the same year as the 1996 Housing Act recommended that local authorities prioritised allocations on the basis of ‘need’, which included those leaving institutional care with mental and behavioural problems (Burney, 2000).

As Parr (2010: 111) contends, the 1990 National Health Service and Community Care Act (NHSCC) facilitated this ‘process of deinstitutionalisation’, through the reduction of long-stay mental facilities and heralded the disproportionate representation of people with mental health problems into the social housing sector. Furthermore, this trend has continued and currently 9 per cent of applicants to local authorities in England have diagnosed mental health issues. Research undertaken by the Housing Corporation (2007) also found that when compared to tenants in general needs social housing those in supported schemes are 15 times more likely to be evicted for ASB (Hunter et al., 2010). For Burney, these allocation policies since the 1996 Housing Act have perpetuated the inherent social problems on many council estates and simultaneously enhanced the social control function of housing management:
Compared with the past when council housing was largely the domain of the ‘respectable’ working class, today’s more ramshackle social tenants include more than their share of potential ‘nuisance neighbours’ and people liable to be both perpetrators and victims of crime. People who need homes urgently tend to be given the readily vacant dwellings on unpopular estates, where their presence may increase the social fragility of these neighbourhoods. Natural social controls against undesirable behaviour are hardest to sustain in such places, while contact with social services and police is likely to be confined to emergencies. Against this background the people managing social housing have increasingly taken on a policing role... (2000: 269-270).

In summary, the strengthening of the grounds for possession contained within the 1996 Housing Act returned to landlords the eviction powers that were restricted by the security of tenure measures introduced by the 1980 Housing Act (Card, 2006), through inserting ‘behavioural regulations into the core of the tenancy agreement’ (Crawford, 2009: 824). This emphasis upon behavioural regulation is significant because there exists a fine line between the perpetrators and victims of ASB especially those with underlying mental health issues23 (British Institute for Brain Injured Children (BIBIC) (2007); Manders, 2010).

It was also noted that the issue of ASB and the use of eviction is highly gendered phenomenon with lone-parent women being held accountable for the behaviour of males (Hunter et al., 1999; Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Bond-Taylor, 2014). It has been suggested that these ‘essentially punitive’ measures to alleviate ASB are unsurprising because as this literature review has suggested throughout, they continue ‘the historical pattern of housing management as an instrument of social control’ (Hunter, 2001: 228). Nonetheless, the advent of the New Labour government in 1997 heralded another sea-change in the policy discourse regarding social housing with the focus now upon the alleviation of ‘social exclusion’ (Card, 2006)

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23 As Manders contends, ASB itself ‘can be a symptom of mental illness’ (2010, p. 147) and this will be further elaborated upon in the findings chapters of this thesis.
3.4 New Labour, ‘ASB’ and the ‘Socially Excluded’ ‘Chavs’: The Usual Suspects!

In January 1993, against the backdrop of rising official crime figures and the previously mentioned inner-city riots, Tony Blair announced New Labour’s stance towards the criminal justice system, community safety and crime prevention in the ‘famous dictum “Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime”’ (Burney, 2005: 18). Whilst in opposition, the Labour Party outlined their proposals for alleviating crime and ASB within impoverished communities with the publication of a 1995 paper entitled: *A Quiet Life: Tough Action on Criminal Neighbours*. This publication proclaimed from the outset that within Britain’s communities ‘there are thousands of people whose lives are made a misery by the people next door’ and proposed the inception of Community Safety Orders (later to become ASBOs) to combat the problem (Labour Party, 1995, cited by Burney, 2009: 26).

These ‘neighbours from hell’ (Field, 2003) discourses are again situated in reference to Britain’s problematic social housing estates and are exemplified in the derogatory appellation of the socially excluded ‘chav’ (Tyler, 2008, 2013a). By the late 1990s, ‘previously disconnected folk devils began to coalesce…with the emergence of the Chav figure’ (Law and Mooney, 2012: 108), and as such became a ‘social underclass *par excellence*’ (Tyler, 2008: 24 original emphasis). According to Hayward and Yar (2006: 18), popular media depictions of ‘chavs’ represent a contemporary reconfiguration of ‘underclass’ discourses, for example, a new British, ‘dangerous underclass’ has been ‘both socially constructed and vilified’ through their inept ‘anti-social’ lifestyles on social housing estates, and flawed consumption practices. For Nayak, these cultural representations of ‘chavs’ ‘as a primitive “white trash”, urban underclass’ reiterate how ‘class demarcation is an unflinching whiplash’ that discriminates between the tasteful and distasteful, the modest and the excessive, the rough and the respectable and the deserving and undeserving poor (2006: 824, 827)25. The ‘chav’ is the latest manifestation of a long and ongoing history in which the distinction between the ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’, is articulated through the

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24 It has been estimated that between 1997 and 2006 the New Labour government created over 3,200 new criminal offences and that over a 1000 of these were introduced through primary legislation (Morris, 2006; Crawford, 2009).

25 On both a personal and academic level, I find the term ‘chav’ and in particular the Council House and Violent acronym as thoroughly abhorrent, and I was dismayed at the fact my own university’s student union previously had ‘chav’ themed events at a nightclub on the campus.
excessive sexual behaviour and corporeal inadequacies of working-class females and the violent predilections of their male counterparts (Nayak, 2006; Tyler, 2008, 2013a). As this thesis continues, the salience of the ‘respectable’ and ‘non-respectable’ dichotomy for those involved in the eviction process will be readily apparent (see findings chapters).

It has been suggested that New Labour’s community-orientated policies towards ASB were primarily influenced by the naïve adoption (Hancock, 2006; Stephen, 2006) of the ‘broken windows’ theory of Wilson and Kelling (1982), a theory that inextricably linked high levels of incivilities and community disorder with fear of crime and more serious offending. However, research undertaken by the government’s Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) in 2000 studied whether high levels of ASB within deprived areas facilitated the onset of more serious crime and ‘found no causal connection of this kind’ (Blackmore, 2007:14). It has also been suggested that New Labour’s particular stance towards community safety or ‘Blairite communitarianism’ is also predicated upon the assumption that the social cohesion eradicated under ‘individualistic Thatcherism’ can be attained through shared familial and moral values (Card, 2001: 207). According to Crawford (1998: 242-243), New Labour’s community safety discourse is premised upon a pernicious form of ‘defensive exclusivity’ engendered through ‘communitarian moralism’ (see Etzioni, 1993; 1997), which fails to acknowledge intra-communal conflict or structural factors.

For Gillies, structural influences were also omitted within New Labour’s communitarian inspired policy discourses, which combine class-based fears over inept parenting, social exclusion, crime and ASB, but also invoke the same anachronistic contentions as their New Right predecessors:

The communitarian concept of a ‘parenting deficit’ is drawn on to cast inadequate childrearing as the source of social ills including crime and anti-social behaviour. As a result, socially excluded parents are positioned as an abject and dangerous underclass, posing a threat to the social fabric (2005: 84)

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26 According to Tyler (2015: 497) it is more apt to consider New Labour as ‘Neoliberal Labour’ as it championed financial capitalism, continued the privatization of welfare and deregulated financial markets.
In a similar vein, Parr (2009) also contends that New Labour’s familial policy discourses to alleviate ASB focused upon inadequate parenting, negate structural influences by concentrating upon individual deficiencies and are framed by a combination of ‘risk’ factor analysis (see Farrington and Welsh, 2007 and earlier in this chapter), communitarian and ‘underclass’ theories. For Flint (2002a), the pervasive influence of communitarian and ‘underclass’ discourses were particularly evident within New Labour’s housing interventions to alleviate ASB. Flint draws upon Foucault’s (1991) formulation of ‘governmentality’, namely the tactics and techniques (rationalities) utilized for the management of populations. According to Flint (2002a: 622), this form of neoliberal governance is not primarily based upon direct authority or intervention but the self-regulating capabilities of autonomous individuals. However, within the context of social housing ASB is challenged in two ways; firstly, by regulating the conduct of tenants (establishing norms and values) through the dual themes of empowerment and responsibility, and secondly through exercising ‘explicit disciplinary power over those tenants who do not conform to constructed norms of self-conduct’ (see also Flint, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b; Flint and Nixon, 2006). The complex issue of empowerment in regards to a local FIP will be returned to in Chapter 7 of this thesis.

As Flint (2002a: 622-623) further notes, however, a common criticism of the governmentality premise is that it negates a comprehension of agency and resistance and as such ‘may neglect material realities, subjective interactions and meanings’. For Parr (2009a: 372), these limitations in regards to ASB and its ‘policy and effects’ highlight the necessity for the governmentality perspective ‘to be developed in conjunction with other sociological theories and tools’. Indeed, as Flint further notes (ibid), Bourdieu’s (1986) conceptualisations regarding the *habitus* and how differing practices and dispositions are formed through class-based socialization could be more apposite than Foucault’s overestimation of the capacity of ‘disciplinary power’ for engendering communal norms of behaviour (see also Watt, 2008).
This thesis adhered to Parr and Flint’s advice and utilised Donzelot’s (1980) similar articulations of the governmentality premise through the concepts of ‘supervised freedom’ and the ‘tutelary complex’, in conjunction, with more contemporary formulisations of Bourdieu’s (1986) social distinctions (see Watt, 2006) and the ‘habitus of instability’ (Barker, 2016). For Donzelot (1980), liberalism heralded the transition from the government of families to the government through families and this had differing consequences for middle and working-class children and their families. For middle class families this transition entailed their children being set free from ‘vulgar fears and constraints’ through ‘protected liberation’, albeit with a ‘sanitary cordon around the child’. However, for the working-class child this transition involved ‘supervised freedom’ and the intensification of surveillance (1980: 47 original emphasis):

The problem in regard to the working-class child was not so much the weight obsolescent constraints as excessive freedom – being left to the street – and the techniques employed in limiting this freedom, in shepherding the child back to spaces where he could be closely watched: the school or the family dwelling.

As with the current TFP agenda and ASB more generally, it was poor working-class woman who took responsibility for supervising the disreputable behaviour of males, and the primary instrument or ‘weapon’ they received in this task was the provision of “social” housing (ibid: 40). With regards to the tutelary complex, moralising and normalising supervisory techniques and practices were undertaken (since the end of the nineteenth century) by various new professionals that coalesced under the ‘common banner’ of social work (ibid: 96). As with the contemporary TFP and the multitude of agencies those deemed as ‘troubled’ families interact with (see findings chapters), this tutelary complex is not confined to a solitary institution, but is

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27 Donzelot’s *The Policing of Families* was first published a year earlier than Foucault’s governmentality premise in 1977, and had a chapter titled ‘From the government of families to government through the family’. However, this chapter heading did not appear in the English translation of the book in 1980. As such, according to Donzelot, Foucault’s ‘analysis of the transition from the family as the model of government to the family as a relay of government is not new’ but he ‘gives it a theoretical extension of great breadth by developing the concept of governmentality’ (2008: 119).

28 For a detailed critique of the Donzelot’s articulations see Barrett and McIntosh (1982: 95-105).
an appendage to already existing statutory and non-statutory agencies such as the judiciary, public assistance, philanthropists, the ‘psy’ experts (psychologists, psychiatrists), medical practitioners, and the education system etc. Despite their heterogeneous nature these tutelary agencies are ‘unified by their sphere of intervention’ the working-class child in danger and ‘dangerous children, or delinquent minors’ (ibid: 96). Moreover, in a prescient manner, and as caveat for the contemporary fixation with the nuisance end of the ASB spectrum, Donzelot suggests that these tutelary agencies ‘under the guise of prevention’ are ‘marking minors who have not committed the least offence with a stigmatised brand’ (ibid: 99). As this thesis unfolds it will be readily apparent that those involved in the eviction process experience intense forms of surveillance through supervised freedom or even ‘unfreedom’ (Hindess, 2001; Power, 2005), and have to contend with the temporal demands for behavioural improvements from numerous tutelary agencies (see Chapters 5, 6, and 7).

This thesis will also employ Wacquant’s (2008, 2009) contentions regarding the ‘precariat’, ‘advanced marginality’ and the penalisation of poverty more generally (see later in this chapter). However, within Wacquant’s formulisations regarding the ‘precariat’ and his sustained critique of neoliberalism there is also a distinct lack of attention paid to the everyday lived realities of these marginalised groups especially in regards to gender and how women experience and resist neoliberal policies (Measor, 2013). This thesis will graphically illustrate the inherent precariousness for those involved in the eviction process and the practices and forms of resistance they employed.

With regards to Bourdieu, Watt (2006: 778) suggests that Distinction (1986) pays considerably more attention to the middle-classes than the lower or working classes, and as such the latter are regarded as a homogenised and undifferentiated group. However, as Watt rightfully further contends, Bourdieu does intimate in Distinction to how the urban working-class ‘knows no other hierarchies than the purely negative ones which are measured by distance from the absolute poverty and insecurity of the sub-proletariat’ (Bourdieu, 1986, cited by Watt, 2006: 778). For Watt (2006) , it is surprising that this form of social distancing does not get considered by Bourdieu as a further form of ‘distinction’, but as he notes, numerous writers enthused by Bourdieu have extended conceptualisations of the habitus and the distinctions employed within impoverished working-class communities (see Lawler, 2005; Skeggs, 1997, 2005; inter alia). In
his later oeuvre however, Bourdieu observed how media and political distinctions ‘between the “deserving poor” and the rest, who [are] morally condemned for their fecklessness and immorality’ had intensified (Bourdieu, 2000, cited by Tyler, 2015: 503), and how such misrepresentations require challenging (Bourdieu, 1998; Bourdieu et al. 1999). Moreover, as Watt (2006) insightfully argues, the sub-proletariat experience of instability and impoverishment that Bourdieu alludes to (and as noted in this literature review), has become increasingly apparent on Britain’s marginalised social housing estates (see also McKenzie, 2015: Tyler, 2103a, 2013b, 2015). In regards to the ‘habitus of instability’, according to Barker (2016: 680), from his insightful qualitative research into the experiences of homeless young people in Australia:

…the habitus of instability reminds us that human action is the culmination of personal histories, external environment and living conditions. Interventions that require individual change without structural change and awareness of the expectations that have been inculcated from past experiences can set people up for failure, reinforcing a sense of naturalised or inevitable inadequacy…

As this thesis unfolds, the ‘habitus of instability’ and feelings of ‘inevitable inadequacy’ (Barker, 2016) and how distinctions are made from other residents (see Watt, 2006), will be exemplified within the parent/s’ narratives. These theoretical conceptualisations will be illustrated through their past and present living conditions and their previous and current interactions with the numerous tutelary agencies involved (see findings Chapters 5, 6 and 7).

Returning to New Labour, their stance towards community safety resulted in the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act (CDA), and primarily followed from concerns raised over problematic neighbours from their heartland constituencies in the Midlands and the North, and through further lobbying by SLCNG (Burney, 2005, 2009). The British Crime Survey (BCS) and Home Office statistics have repeatedly shown that concerns over ‘problem families’, fear of crime, and perceived high levels of disorder are more apparent within the social housing sector (Brown, 2004; Burney, 2002, 2005; Stephen and Squires, 2004; Nicholas et al., 2007). For example, according to the Home Office, inhabitants of urban areas were twice as likely as those from rural areas to
perceive high levels of ASB, and 31 per cent of social housing tenants reported high levels of ASB compared with 15 and 18 per cent for owner-occupiers and private renters respectively (Nicholas et al., 2007).

The CDA introduced the following legislative measures: Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) (see Campbell, 2002; Burney, 2002, 2008). Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) (see Bullock and Jones, 2004; Stephen and Squires, 2003, 2004), Parenting Orders (see Arthur, 2005; Walters and Woodward, 2007; Burney and Gelsthorpe, 2008; Holt, 2008), and Child Curfew Orders (see Walsh, 1999, 2002, 2003). The CDA also inaugurated the formation of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) and provided a statutory definition of ASB as ‘behaving in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more person not of the same household’ (CDA, 1998 cited by Blackmore, 2007: 10). It has been suggested that the CDA is one part of a twofold response to the curtailing of ASB with the other being the previously mentioned 1996 Housing Act. For example, the 1996 Housing Act significantly located the problem of ASB within the social housing sector, whereas the legal measures contained within the CDA do not link the problem to any particular place or form of tenure (Hunter, 2001). Nevertheless, although the measures introduced through the CDA are non-tenure specific the threat of eviction for social housing tenants has remained a potent device for securing compliance (see Casey, 2012). Moreover, research undertaken in Scotland (see DTZ Consulting and Heriot-Watt University, 2006) found that 80 per cent of the recipients of ASBOs were inhabitants of social housing (Crawford, 2009).

The Police Reform Act of 2002 gave housing associations the right to apply for ASBOs and the 2003 Anti-social Behaviour Act introduced the requirement that all social landlords compile reports on their ASB policies and procedures. Moreover, the 2003 Act also introduced Dispersal Orders (see Walsh, 2003; Crawford and Lister, 2007), extended freestanding injunction powers to all social landlords, and introduced the provision for demoted tenancies to make the eviction process easier. These Demotion Orders for local authority tenants reduce their security of tenure to the same status as introductory tenancies for a twelve month period, whereas housing association tenants are demoted to assured shorthold tenancies (Hunter, 2006). The Welfare Reform Act 2007 included proposals for housing benefit sanctions for perpetrators of ASB who refuse to work with FIPs (Parr and Nixon, 2008), and the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
introduced insecure tenancies and a support agreement for those living within FIP temporary accommodation (see later in this chapter).

This correlation between council estates and social exclusion has also attracted considerable academic scrutiny (see Lee and Murie, 1997; Somerville, 1998; Coles et al., 2001; Hastings and Dean, 2003; Cowan and McDermont, 2006). Coles et al., (2001) undertook the secondary analysis of two large data sets: the Survey of English Households (SEH) and the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS), to examine the experiences of young people in social housing compared with those in other tenure groups. Their research noted that in regards to parental supervision young people (10-15 year olds) from social housing did not inform their parents when they went out, unlike their peers in owner-occupied housing. However, the research revealed no significant statistical differences between types of tenure when the alcohol, cigarette and drug consumption of young people was considered. Interestingly, the authors contended that the only difference between social housing and owner-occupied estates is possibly the visibility of problematic behaviour, for example, drug and alcohol abuse within social housing estates is expected, whereas the consumption of alcohol and illicit drugs by youths on private estates ‘is less expected, so never explored’ (ibid: 22). Moreover, rather than demonizing young people from social housing as morally deficient, a greater consideration of the detrimental consequences of social exclusion was required. Furthermore, by the year 2000, 22 per cent of heads of household in social housing were unemployed compared to 5 per cent of owner-occupiers, and only 7 per cent of 10-15-year-olds from owner-occupied properties had no working adult, compared to 53 per cent for those living in social housing (ibid: 24). Concerns over social exclusion and housing have also been forwarded by the housing charity Shelter (2016). In England, there are currently over 1.8 million households waiting for social housing, which represents a 97 per cent increase since 1997. Moreover, two-thirds of these households have been on the waiting list for more than a year, and in 2012 there were 41,000 households (with dependent children) living in temporary accommodation.

Following from the New Labour election victory, the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was formed in 1997 and specifically aimed to ‘develop integrated and sustainable approaches to the problems of the worst housing estates, including crime, drugs, unemployment, community breakdown, and
bad schools etc.’ (SEU, 1998, cited by Card, 2001: 213). These communal concerns were also reiterated within the SEUs definition of what the term ‘social exclusion’ actually entails:

[social exclusion is]...a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown (SEU, 2000, cited by Card, 2001: 206).

In order to facilitate these integrated and sustainable approaches to neighbourhood renewal 18 Policy Action Teams (PATs) were created and some specifically focused on the deleterious impact of ASB upon disadvantaged communities (see Card, 2001; Coles et al., 2001; Stephen and Squires, 2003). The report *Unpopular Housing* by PAT 5 (DETR, 1999) equated ASB with a cycle of decline that had facilitated low housing demand in certain localities. PAT 6 (Home Office, 2000) examined the utility of neighbourhood wardens to alleviate ASB in deprived areas of social housing. Moreover, PAT 8 (SEU, 2000) specifically focused on examining the measures used to tackle ASB and made the following recommendations: making the alleviation of ASB the responsibility of the Home Office; promoting prevention through multi-agency intervention and information sharing; more rapid enforcement through current powers; the support and resettlement of ASB perpetrators and the prioritising of tackling racial harassment (Card, 2001). On a local level, the PAT 8 report also contained the measures being deployed to prevent ASB: ‘good neighbour’ and tenancy agreements, housing management initiatives and neighbourhood wardens, and early intervention through mediation and case conferences (Stephen and Squires, 2003).

Interestingly, as Hunter (2001) notes, PAT 8 also acknowledged that no singular definition of ASB exits as ‘it covers a wide range of behaviour from litter to serious harassment’ and because ‘behaviour regarded as acceptable by some can be completely unacceptable to others’ (SEU, 2000 cited by Hunter, 2001: 223). Furthermore, PAT 8 also noted that those living adjacent to perpetrators in privately rented or owner-occupier properties ‘are less protected from anti-social behaviour than social housing tenants’ (ibid: 231). In order to address the issue of ASB within other housing tenures the report tentatively recommended the usage of injunctions and evictions
for problematic private tenants and making private landlords liable for the costs involved. As for owner-occupiers, the report suggested that local authorities and community groups support and encourage people to utilise injunctions against the perpetrators (Hunter, 2001: 232 see also Carr et al., 2007).

Returning to the emphasis upon social housing tenants, PAT 8 called for more preventative measures to address the causal factors of ASB and warned against the problem of displacement following eviction:

> Evicting anti-social people does not mean that the problem will go away. Some people will be deterred from future anti-social behaviour by the experience of eviction or exclusion from the housing register. Some people will not. If their problems are not addressed, the pattern of behaviour will repeat itself (SEU, 2000, cited by Hunter, 2001: 230).

PAT 8 reported the deleterious consequences of eviction and exclusion for perpetrators of ASB and their families, for instance, losing contact with familial networks and service providers and children ending up in the care system (Stephen and Squires, 2003). Despite this caveat, social landlords in England issue approximately 550,000 Notices of Seeking Possession (NOSPs) annually which equates to 13 per cent of the total housing stock managed. Moreover, in 2002/2003 housing associations and local authorities evicted 26,000 tenants; however, only 1,500 of these were for ASB (ODPM, 2005). Social landlords currently evict 2,000 tenants for ASB annually and the eviction process (on average) takes seven months for the court to impose a possession order (DCLG, 2013a). It was the PAT 8 recommendation for more intensive forms of intervention (by encouraging local CDRPs to develop residential support schemes for those evicted because of ASB), however, which heralded the inception of Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) (Parr and Nixon, 2008).

### 3.5 ‘Keeping Mum’: Family Intervention Projects

New Labour’s Respect Agenda was ‘effectively introduced’ through the White Paper *Respect and Responsibility* in 2003 (Squires, 2008: 241; Burney, 2009) and resulted in the previously
mentioned Anti-Social Behaviour Act of the same year. This White Paper yet again focused upon the familial causes (inadequate parenting) of ASB and crime within Britain’s socially excluded housing estates, and invoked the central tenets of the ‘underclass’ contentions noted earlier in this chapter:

There are a small number of families that can be described as ‘dysfunctional’. Two or three families and their wider network of contacts can create havoc on a housing estate or inner city neighbourhood. It is always in areas of greatest disadvantage that this corrosive effect is seen and felt most clearly. Sometimes it occurs where there has been considerable family breakdown; multiple partners can pass through the house; children do not have a positive role model; there is little in the way of a predictable routine; and the lifestyle is such that it makes the lives of neighbours a complete misery (Home Office, 2003: 23).

As Parr and Nixon (2008: 164) note, following New Labour’s election victory in 2005, the then prime minister, Tony Blair, prioritised the issue of ‘respect’ through a twin track approach to combating ASB, with interventions that would both protect the wider community and address the root causes of problematic behaviour. Essentially, this twin track approach entailed supportive measures aimed at addressing the underlying causes of problematic conduct and was combined with disciplinary sanctions to ‘grip’ families who failed to comply with the interventions (Nixon, Pawson and Sosenko, 2010; Batty and Flint, 2012). It has been suggested however, that what was missing in New Labour’s notion of ‘respect’ and subsequent interventions (that primarily target young people and their families’) is attention paid to ‘fostering a “culture of respect” at all levels of the community’ (France and Meridith, 2009: 77). A more forceful critique of New Labour’s notion of ‘respect’ is that it negates a consideration of the underlying causes of ‘disrespect’ and as such is ‘patronising’ and ‘arbitrarily punitive’ (Somerville, 2009: 149). Moreover, it arguably continues the traditional dichotomy between the ‘respectable’ and ‘disreputable’ working-class. For Pearson (2009: 66), the Respect Agenda represented the latest manifestation of ‘respectable’ fears (see Pearson, 1983) because parenting orders, ASBOs, and

29 For detailed consideration of New Labour’s respect and ASB agenda see Millie’s (2009) edited collection.
concerns over ‘neighbours from hell’ and the perceived immorality of working-class youth are framed within a ‘ceaseless narrative of decline’.

The central tenets of the Respect Agenda were forwarded in January 2006 through the publication of the government’s Respect Action Plan (2006a, 2006b), which unveiled new measures to combat ASB primarily through getting a ‘grip’ on ‘problem families’ with the creation of 53 Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) in England and Wales. As Crossley (2015) suggests, New Labour’s concerns over problematic families and ASB, has evolved into the contemporary TFP agenda (see later in this chapter). Although the interventions offered by the FIPs vary, they generally last between six months and a year and involve assistance in directing clients to other services, financial management assistance (benefits claims), advocacy and liaison support, home and behaviour management and parenting skills training. Moreover, most FIPs provide an outreach-only service so clients remain in their homes, however, some FIPs have the provision for a ‘core’ residential option in which service users are accommodated in flats managed and provided by the FIP or local authority (Batty and Flint, 2012).

This form of familial intervention is aimed at those at risk of eviction (or previously evicted) because of ASB, and is broadly based upon the practices developed from the ‘perceived success’ (Parr, 2009b: 1256-1257; White et al., 2008) of the Dundee Families Project (see Dillane et al., 2001; Scott, 2006), and the independent evaluations of a further seven FIPs. For example, the evaluation that followed from the Shelter Inclusion Project (see Jones et al., 2005, 2006a, 2006b) found that 71 per cent of the referrals resulted in positive outcomes, whereas the Nixon et al., (2006a, 2006b) evaluation of six FIPs found over 80 per cent of the families involved had stabilised their tenancies and were no longer at risk of eviction. Furthermore, all three project evaluations noted that for service users the FIPs had produced positive outcomes (Parr, 2009b: 1260; Carr, 2010). However, many of the lone-parent females interviewed as part of the Nixon et al. (2006a, 2006b) evaluations contested the legitimacy of the ASB allegations that initially led to the referrals to the FIPs, doubted if their claims would be taken seriously because they had been labelled as anti-social, and some perceived complaints from neighbours as merely ‘personal

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30 As White et al. (2008) note however, 19 FIPs already existed prior to 2006 and a further thirty-four actually followed from the Respect Action Plan.
vendettas’ against their household (Nixon and Hunter, 2009: 128-129; Nixon and Parr, 2006; Nixon, 2007; and Chapter 6 of this thesis).

There remains a dearth of qualitative research into the specific problems that prompt social landlords to utilise their ASB powers (Hunter et al., 2007a) and surprisingly no previous research into the familial consequences of the eviction process. This thesis will rectify these omissions. It also has to be acknowledged that involvement with FIPs, or the right to decline the intervention, is ‘highly constrained’ by the threat of eviction and/or the risk of children being placed into the care system for non-compliance (Parr and Nixon, 2008: 162; see also Nixon et al., 2006a, 2006b; Casey, 2012). The parent/s’ experiences of the eviction process and their feelings on the prospect of losing children to the care system will be presented in the findings chapters of this thesis.

Nonetheless, positive findings for the families involved were also noted by White et al., (2008), who undertook evaluative research of the 53 FIPs. This qualitative and quantitative research was undertaken on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and focused upon the 885 families referred to FIPs between February and October 2007. According to White et al., (2008), 76 per cent of the families referred were inhabitants of social housing, 91 per cent were white, 56 per cent of the families had more than three children, 62 per cent were households with no working adult, and 69 per cent were headed by a single parent, with 62 per cent of these lone females. As Garrett incisively contends, these social demographics suggest that on an academic level there remain ‘unexplored issues connected to class, ethnicity and gender given that the projects appear to be targeting poor, “white” women and their children’ (2007a: 223-224). The gendered and classed aspects of ASB housing interventions have also been observed by Carr (2007; 2010). For Carr (2010), contemporary ASB initiatives should be historically situated because, as this chapter on the history of social housing has noted, they return back to Victorian fears over urban proximity and the management of these fears through the notion of respectability. Moreover, contemporary interventions such as FIPs continue the distinction between the respectable and disreputable poor and a pivotal element of this cleavage is the notion of the ‘good’ mother, who is held accountable for the behaviour of males. This

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31 When Gordon Brown became Prime Minister in June 2007 the Respect Task Force was disbanded, however, New Labour’s focus upon ASB and ‘respect’ continued with the establishment of the Youth Taskforce at the DCSF (see Millie, 2009).
thesis will examine and extend this complex inter-play between the issue of respectability and the dynamics of class, gender, and white ethnicity for those involved in the eviction process.

White et al., (2008) also identified various risk factors that led to the initial referrals and these included poor parenting (67 per cent), health problems (63 per cent), substance misuse (35 per cent), familial breakdown (27 per cent) and domestic violence (25 per cent). In regards to mental health, 69 per cent of the adults referred suffered from depression and 34 per cent of the children had ADHD (see also Hunter et al., 2007a, 2007b). Significantly, the authors also noted that 78 per cent of those referred agreed to partake in the interventions; however, 35 per cent of the families were still committing ASB after the intervention had ceased. The issue of gender and domestic violence is also significant as women appear to be simultaneously held accountable for the actions of the male perpetrators of ASB (Hunter and Nixon, 2001 and earlier in this chapter) while also being victims themselves (Nixon and Hunter, 2009). For example, of the 256 families involved with the six FIPs evaluated by Nixon et al., (2006a, 2006b), 47 per cent of the females reported suffering or previously suffering from domestic violence that was committed by other members of the household. The significant issue of domestic violence and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA) will be revisited in Chapters 6 and 7 of this thesis. Within ASB discourses there has not only been a relative silence on the gendered aspects of the phenomenon, but also a dearth of knowledge regarding the ‘lived material realities of ASB’ from the perspective of the families involved (Nixon and Hunter, 2009: 125-126; Morris, 2013; Bond-Taylor 2014). This interpretive research will contribute to addressing this lacunae by empirically examining and eliciting the experiences and responses of parent/s evicted or threatened with eviction (see findings Chapters 5, 6 and 7) by their local housing association/local authority because of the anti-social behaviour of other members of their household.

Besides self-referrals there are a plethora of agencies that can refer families to FIPs including: local authority housing departments, housing associations and other RSLs, private landlords, homelessness agencies, the police, fire and probation services, social services, neighbourhood wardens; community safety and youth offending services, GPs, health visitors and school nurses, child and adult mental health services, drug and alcohol support services, domestic violence support agencies, teenage pregnancy groups, environmental health agencies and the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) (White et al., 2008). Several of the participants in my research previously
had, or were currently living in, temporary accommodation provided and managed by the FIP. The families living within this form of temporary accommodation were subjected to various rules and regulations such as: daily checks on the upkeep and cleanliness of their property, a requirement to return to the accommodation in the evenings, and visitors only permitted by agreement with FIP staff. This issue of surveillance within the ‘core’ residential option has sparked a rather acrimonious debate between academics regarding the objectivity of government funded research into FIPs (see Bannister et al., 2007; Garrett, 2007a, 2007b; Nixon, 2007).

According to Garrett, the previously mentioned evaluations undertaken by Nixon et al., (2006a, 2006b) failed to critically interrogate how the residential variant of FIPs ‘confuse, coerce and infantilize residents’ (2007a: 223). Nonetheless, as Nixon (2007) contends in her rejoinder to Garrett, the evaluations of the FIPs gave access to those on the receiving end of ASB housing sanctions and illustrated the often contested nature of ASB allegations (see also Chapter 5). The participants’ experiences of the FIP and the concomitant issue of tutelary surveillance or forms of ‘social panopticism’ (Wacquant, 2001: 407) will be exemplified in the findings chapters of this thesis. In summary, this sub-section on FIPs has noted both the historical continuities regarding the issue of ‘respect’ and ‘respectability’, and alluded to, and will return to, the complex interplay between the dynamics of class, gender, and white ethnicity for those experiencing the eviction process and working with a local FIP.

As Parr (2009b) suggests, the Respect Agenda and the necessity for FIPs were framed within a discourse that situated the historically maligned ‘problem family’ as both the primary cause and solution to ASB. Furthermore, there is a substantial gap between political rhetoric and the effects of policies aimed at problematic families and this undoubtedly requires greater consideration. In the findings chapters of this thesis, I will concentrate on the latter and the effects of sanctions, through explicating the familial consequences of the eviction process. However, it will be firstly necessary to continue with the former and political rhetoric, and consider the discursive shift from ‘problem’ to ‘troubled’ families inherent within more contemporary governmental discourses and policies.
3.6 The Coalition, ‘Precariat’ Riots, and the Troubled Families Programme

With regards to social housing, the Coalition passed the Localism Act 2011 and gave social landlords the power to grant tenancies for a fixed length of time rather than lifetime tenancies. The minimum length of tenancies (in exceptional circumstances) is two years but the norm would be a period of five years or more with no upper limit on the length of tenancy. However, councils can still offer lifetime tenancies, and the usage of more flexible tenancies is based on the assumption that it would let social landlords manage their properties more fairly (DCLG, 2011). The Welfare Reform Act (2012) introduced changes to housing benefit through the ‘bedroom tax’ and restricted housing benefit payments for social housing tenants deemed as having more rooms than they required.

These cuts coincided with plans for a Universal Credit and caps on the total amount of welfare benefits that can be claimed. As McKenzie (2015) notes, following their 2010 election victory, the Coalition government introduced a plethora of punitive and draconian measures as part of their austerity programme to fix Britain’s ‘broken’ finances after the banking crisis of 2008. Moreover, this neoliberal austerity program has facilitated cuts to unemployment and disability benefits, income support and housing benefit for those already living precarious lives.

Guy Standing (2011; 2014) utilises the concepts of the ‘precariat’ and ‘denizen’ respectively, to situate the proliferation of a distinct section of the working-class facing an increase in precarious labour and the dismantling of welfare provision under deliberate neoliberal policies. The precariat are defined through their labour market insecurity, short-term and zero-hours contracts and low pay, whereas the ‘denizen’ is characterized (in contrast to the ‘citizen’) as having to plead for access to public services and benefits. As such, the precariat are dependent upon ‘the discretionary decisions of local bureaucrats who are often inclined to moralistic judgements about whose behaviour or attitude is deserving’ (2014: 11). As Lea (2013) notes, within this transformation from welfare citizenship to denizenship, housing management agencies and local authorities have joined with the police in managing an array of ASB interventions.

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32 The Universal Credit is essentially a single monthly payment for people in or out of work, which merges together some of the existing benefits and tax credits (GOV.UK, 2016). However, this single monthly payment means that housing benefit will go straight to the claimant rather than the relevant landlord, and could lead to financial difficulties and the possibility of eviction for rent arrears, if claimants fail to manage their finances properly.
(2014:10), this labour market precariousness and the dispossession of rights engender ‘a general consciousness of relative deprivation and a combination of anomie, alienation and anger’. According to Standing (2011; 2014) however, there are a limited number of possible outlets for these marginalized groups to express themselves such as rioting and/or the rise of neo-fascism.

In an earlier interpretation of the precariat, Wacquant (2008: 246-247) suggests it represents a ‘stillborn group’ comprised of ‘heterogeneous individuals and categories negatively defined by social privation, material need and symbolic deficit’ (original emphasis). With regards to symbolic deficit, as Tyler (2015: 495 original emphasis) suggests, a myriad of detrimental media and political representations of ‘precariat populations’ are essentially forms of ‘audio-visual policing’ that are ‘mobilised as technologies of social control’ and then used to further justify austerity measures and the retrenchment of welfare policies. As Hancock and Mooney (2013: 117-118) argue, detrimental media images or ‘poverty porn’ represent a form of moral tutelage (under the guise of ‘self-improvement’ television programmes), which further perpetuate distinctions between the ‘deserving’ and ‘underserving poor’ through misleading and exaggerated ‘accounts of the behaviour, attitudes and dispositions of marginalised groups’. As previously noted however, Wacquant (2008; 2009) offers sparse insights into the lived realities of the precariat in his formulations of advanced marginality and the penalisation of poverty more generally, and largely omits a consideration of gender and practices of resistance (Measor, 2013). As Gelsthorpe suggests:

While we benefit from Wacquant’s theoretical analysis enormously, closer attention to empirical studies of women, welfare and penalisation on the ground might add to or extend his analysis of the ways in which economic, race, class and gender relations are anchored across state structures. (2010: 381 emphasis added)

This thesis will adhere to Gelthorpe’s (2010) and Measor’s (2013) intuitive advice through empirically examining the experiences of those involved in the eviction process (and a local FIP) and as such will link micro analysis to Wacquant’s (and others) structural formulations. However, it will be evident within the findings chapters of this thesis that for those at the sharp
end of neoliberal familial interventions, ‘an acute awareness of the limits of resistance and the fragility of agency’ is undoubtedly required (Measor, 2013: 135).

Returning to ASB, Theresa May, the new Home Secretary in the Conservative-led Coalition government announced in July 2010 that there would be a review of the previous Labour government’s ASB sanctions. In particular, the ASBO required being reformed because of the levels of bureaucracy, the financial costs involved and because ‘too often criminalised young people unnecessarily, acting as a conveyor belt to serious crime and prison’ (May, 2010 cited by Ireland, 2011:26). The Coalition’s proposed ASB measures prioritized a commitment to restorative and rehabilitative approaches and improved support services, however, in regards to support services, this is doubtful in an era when austerity measures have facilitated harsh cuts to public spending (Jamieson, 2012; and Chapter 7 of this thesis). The Home Secretary in 2011, proposed replacing ASBOs with the Crime Prevention Injunction (CPI) and the Crime Behaviour Order (CBO). In regards to the former, the CPI like its ASBO predecessor can be applied for by the local authority, registered social landlords and the police but will now be issued through the County Court as opposed to the Magistrates’ Court (Home Office, 2011). The CBO was planned to replace the previous ‘post-conviction’ ASBO and similar to the CPI (see Home Office, 2011) ‘could impose positive requirements upon defendants, but gives little information about what type of obligations these might include’ (Ireland, 2001: 27). 33

Returning to the planned implantation of CPIs, as Ireland contends:

It is probable that the creation of CPIs in place of ASBOs will make little difference to the recipients of the orders or to the communities they aim to protect. Nor will the majority of the criticisms of ASBOs be addressed by CPIs. In moving applications to the county courts, the government is simply making it easier to justify a civil standard of proof and therefore hoping to make applications faster, cheaper and more likely to succeed. (2011: 27; see also McCarthy, 2014: 19)

33 As Ireland (2011: 27) notes, the minimal examples given in the consultation paper (Home office, 2011) are muzzling and/or keeping a dangerous dog on a lead and anger management courses for the perpetrators’ of ASB.
It was not only ASBOs that were to be replaced, as dispersal zones and curfews are due to be superseded by Police Direction Powers (PDPs), which grant police officers and Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs) the power to ‘direct any individual causing or likely to cause crime and disorder away from a particular place, and to confiscate related items’ (Home Office, 2011 cited by McCarthy, 2014: 19). Furthermore, Crack House Closures and Premises Closure Orders have been replaced by the Community Protection Order (CPO) and as with the former orders they replace can be applied for by the police, local authority or housing landlords (McCarthy, 2014). As McCarthy (2014) notes, many of the above changes are essentially continuing and rebranding the ASB powers introduced by the previous Labour administration, albeit with a greater focus on coercion being added to supportive elements. Furthermore, the early interventionist strategy of New Labour has continued through the Coalition’s commitment to familial intervention programmes (see also Ireland, 2011).

As Arthur (2015: 443-444) notes, prior to his election victory in 2010, David Cameron used the dual concepts of the ‘Big Society’ and ‘societally Broken Britain’ to exemplify the Conservative’s flagship policies, and these subsequently became a major part of the Coalition government’s legislative programme. The notion of the Big Society was championed as a means of mending ‘Broken Britain’ by engendering a bigger and stronger society (Cabinet Office, 2010), and this was to be accomplished through the family because ‘strong families are the foundation of a bigger, stronger society’ (Cameron, 2010a no page number; see also 2010b; 2011a). Moreover, Cameron went even further by proclaiming his administration would support ‘every kind of family’ and be the ‘most family friendly government you have ever seen in this country’ (Cameron, 2010a: no page number). However, alleviating structural factors such as poverty were not deemed as significant by Cameron because ‘what matters most to a child’s life chances is not the wealth of the upbringing but the warmth of their parenting’ (Cameron, 2010b: no page number).

As Arthur (2015) further notes, Cameron’s family friendly rhetoric was short lived and following the August 2011 riots in several cities in England,34 he located the riots as the outcome of inept

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34 For more detailed analysis of the August 2011 riots see Arthur (2014), Collett (2013); Creaney (2011); Grant (2014); Tyler, (2013a, 2013b); and Wain and Joyce, (2011).
lone-parenting and promulgated how discipline and rigour were required to mend the ‘broken society’ (Cameron, 2011b; 2011c). As noted earlier in this chapter, previous riots in the early 1990s were largely blamed on lone-female parents for not controlling their male relatives on Britain’s council estates (Campbell, 1993). In a similar vein, and reiterating the central tenets of Charles Murray’s (1996a, 1996b, 1996c) anachronistic ‘underclass’ thesis, Cameron blamed the offspring of lone-female parents and the welfare system for the riots:

...many of the rioters...have no father at home. Perhaps they come from one of the neighbourhoods where it’s standard for children to have a mum and not a dad, where it’s normal for young men to grow up without a male role model… [Welfare] encourages the worst in people...incites laziness that excuses bad behaviour that erodes self-discipline that discourages hard work...above all that drains responsibility away from people (Cameron, 2011c, no page numbers).

In the findings chapters of this thesis it will become readily apparent that for those females who had made considerable efforts to escape from domestic violence (from former partners), not having a ‘male role model’ at home was the very least of their numerous anxieties (see Chapter 6 and 7). As Tyler (2013b: 180) maintains, the media coverage of the riots ‘unleashed a torrent of “underclass” appellations’ and the necessity for removing welfare benefits and evicting the rioters’ families from local authority housing were commonly expressed. The wider social consequences of these dual discursive themes (benefits withdrawal and social housing evictions) were strikingly evident in the results of a government e-petition proposing that the families of the rioters should have their benefits cut and be evicted from their council homes, and was the first e-petition to receive over 100,000 signatures. However, an e-petition that suggested such these measures would further isolate families and would wrongly punish those not involved in the riots only received nineteen signatures (Arthur, 2015). Following Wacquant (2008: 24), Tyler (2013b: 183) argues, that the August 2011 riots were used in political and public domains as ‘definitive proof’ of the existence of a distinctive group of people ‘defined by their antisocial behaviours’. For Butler (2014), media and political depictions of the rioters and similar denigrations of the ‘troubled’ families illustrate that the ‘TFP is as much an exercise in re-moralising as it is in welfare selectivity’ (2014: 418-419).
The Coalition government’s emphasis upon the riots as being the corollary of poor parenting gave ‘additional impetus’ to the launch of the Troubled Families Programme (TFP) in December 2011, and was initially planned as a three year initiative (2012-2015) to ‘turn around’ the lives of troublesome families (Hayden and Jenkins, 2014: 632; Butler, 2014; Crossley, 2015). The government defined the ‘troubled family ’ as follows:

Troubled families are those that have problems and cause problems to the community around them, putting high costs to the public sector (DCLG, 2013 emphasis added).

This focus upon having problems as well as causing problems ‘discursively collapses families with troubles and troublesome families’ (Levitas, 2012: 8) and is central to the political rhetoric regarding ‘troubled’ families (Hayden and Jenkins, 2015). The financial costs attributed to an estimated ‘but not necessarily the precise figure’ of 120,000 families in England (DCLG, 2013b: 4; see also Levitas, 2012) were £9 billion a year, or £75,000 per ‘troubled’ family. The funding of the TFP (approximately £448 million) came from a series of recycled cuts from the budgets of: the Ministry of Justice; Department for Education; Department for Health; Department for Work and Pensions; and the Department of Communities and Local Government. Furthermore, the TFP is based on a payment-by-results (PBR) framework, for example, 152 local authorities in England receive an attachment fee for every family that joins the programme and a further PBR payment if positive outcomes are implemented under the national criteria. Originally, this national criteria pertained to reducing costs to the public purse, worklessness, ASB and Crime, and increasing school attendance (Butler, 2014; Hayden and Jenkins, 2014, 2015; Crossley, 2015). Plans for an expansion of the programme (Phase 2) to include 400,000 more troublesome families soon followed (DCLG, 2013c), and the 2014 Budget announced that 40,000 of these additional ‘troubled’ families would join the TFP from 2014/15 (HM Treasury, 2014). The previous national criteria was also extended to also include children requiring help, adults and young people at risk of worklessness, parents and children with health problems and families who had experienced domestic violence (DCLG, 2014).
In 2015, David Cameron heralded the success of the TFP following government figures that suggested 99 per cent of troubled families had their lives turned around (DCLG, 2015), however, as the findings chapters of this thesis will reveal it may be more apposite to consider that for some, their lives are being turned completely upside down (see Chapters 6 and 7). The criteria for families having their lives deemed as being successfully ‘turned around’ were having their children’s school attendance improved to 85%, the reduction of youth crime by 33%, the ASB of the family being reduced by 60%, and a member of the family not claiming out-of-work benefits by finding continuous employment for a period of 3 to 6 months (depending on the type of benefits being claimed) (DCLG, 2012; see also Crossley, 2015). According to Crossley (2015) however, the most recent government evaluation of FIPs (Department for Education, 2011) found that a third of the families had no reduction in crime and ASB, half had no improvement in their parenting, alcohol or drug misuse, or improved school attendance for their children, and four out of the five families who undertook the intervention had no improvement in their employment status. As such, this latest evaluation noted ‘there is limited evidence that ASB FIPs generate better outcomes than non-FIP interventions on family functioning and health issues’ (Department for Education, 2011, cited by Crossley, 2015: 4).

As Crossley (2015: 5) forcefully contends, by examining the government’s own figures regarding ‘troubled’ families you can seemingly refute any notions of criminogenic, ‘work shy’ ‘neighbours from hell’. For instance, the interim report from the national evaluation of the TFP (DCLG, 2014) noted the following characteristics of the families involved: 85 per cent had no adult with a criminal offence in the previous six months; 58 per cent had no police call outs in the previous six months; 97 per cent had children with zero or one offence in the previous six months; 84 per cent had children not excluded permanently from school; 26 per cent had at least one adult in work; 77 per cent had no young people classified as not in education, employment or training (NEET); 78 per cent were not at risk of eviction; 77 per cent did not have children identified as being in need; 95 per cent had no adults identified as being Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPO); and finally 89 per cent had no adult currently on any form of ASB intervention. For Crossley (2015), the primary characteristics of ‘troubled’ families are not crime and ASB, but impoverishment, being white, inhabiting social housing and having at least one member of the family suffering from mental or physical illness.
Although the TFP is a non-statutory form of intervention and families are required to ‘sign up’ to the programme its basis is neither voluntary or involuntary, because families may be facing more severe sanctions such as the threat of eviction (at the same time) from the other agencies involved (Hayden and Jenkins, 2014; Bond-Taylor, 2014). Within government literature the utility of the threat of eviction is repeatedly invoked to note how families who may not have complied with the TFP subsequently do so (see Casey, 2012). According to Jamison (2012), the ASB measures inaugurated by New Labour, and continued under the Coalition, are often critiqued within the context of the criminalization of social policy thesis (see Squires, 2006, 2008; Squires and Lea, 2013). However, as Jamison further notes, the inherent ‘complexities of the ASB agenda mean that its relationship to the criminalization of social policy cannot be definitively drawn’ without acknowledging local variations that can ‘mediate the “toughness” agenda’ (ibid: 452-453). This point has particular salience in regards to the local implementation of the TFP agenda. For example, there is a distinct division within policy and academic literature that has considered FIPs between those who maintain this form of intervention has primarily positive outcomes for the families involved (White et al., 2008; Flint, 2011, inter alia), and more critical commentaries that seriously doubt the efficacy of such projects (Garret, 2007a; 2007b; Crossley, 2015).

It has to be acknowledged however, that to perceive FIPs as either inherently ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is an ‘overly simplistic’ dichotomy as these projects are implemented and delivered with local variations (Parr, 2011: 718). For Parr (2009b: 1268), FIPs have provided social workers with the opportunity to work holistically with the families involved through domestic violence and mental health services, and to engage in ‘meaningful talk’ and ‘communicative reason’ to address wider issues that may impact upon individual behaviours. Nonetheless, regardless of local variations compliance with the TFP is ultimately secured through the sanction of eviction. For Batty and Flint (2012: 345-346), the Coalition retained the previous New Labour administration’s focus on responsibilisation, early intervention and the necessity for improved multi-agency services, however, ‘policy narratives describe, but fail to define, notions of “gripping” and “challenging” families’. The findings chapters of this thesis will graphically illustrate how those deemed as ‘troubled’ families are ‘gripped’ within the tutelary complex, and how they mediate the familial consequences of the eviction process, and their perceptions of a local FIP. The TFP agenda will also be further critically examined and elaborated upon in Chapter 7 and the conclusion of this
thesis and as such will further examine and extend scholastic commentaries on the
criminalisation of social policy thesis.

3.7 Conclusion

The primary aims of this and the preceding chapter have been to consider whether or not
contemporary housing interventions to alleviate ASB constitute a rupture from the historical role
housing has played in the governance of conduct (see Flint, 2006); examine how socio-political
perceptions of council tenants have changed since its inception; and review the relevant literature
regarding contemporary housing interventions to alleviate ASB, since their inauguration under
New Labour, through to the contemporary era. It could be argued that any discussion of whether
or not contemporary housing interventions to alleviate ASB represent a rupture from the
historical role housing has played in the governance of conduct has to acknowledge the
significant continuities, and that in many respects ‘Victorian links between moral decay and
housing have never left us’ (Carr et al., 2007: 107). For instance, this chapter noted that housing
problems, like social problems more generally, have attracted a raft of legislative interventions.

In order to situate these various socially constructed housing problems (Harloe, 1995; Malpass,
2005), Chapter Two commenced with a detailed consideration of the deleterious living
conditions of the urban working classes prior to state intervention in the nineteenth century (see
Burnett, 1986). It was noted that Victorian concerns and subsequent legislation were not just
predicated upon the necessity to provide accommodation for the urban masses and eradicate
physical diseases, but also the criminogenic dispositions of the ‘dangerous classes’ (Carr et al.
2007). These Victorian perceptions were highly gendered as females were held not only
responsible for the socialisation of children and maintenance of the home (Carr, 2007), but also
the morality and respectability of other members of their household (Hunt, 1999).

These dual themes of ‘respectability’ and the ‘critical disciplinary role of gender’ (Carr, 2007;
2010) are intimately entwined and reverberate throughout the history of social housing, and
arguably represent the most salient of the historical continuities. As regards the former, the
‘homes fit for heroes’ campaign and the ‘Addison Acts’ that followed provided council housing
on a mass scale for initially only the ‘respectable’ members of the working class, however, slum
clearance schemes continued until the 1970s and less desirable tenants required housing by local
The necessity to rehouse the former inhabitants of the slums meant that the social composition of the estates changed and the divisive allocation practices of local authority housing managers reinforced the enduring ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ distinction that was equally prevalent amongst the council tenants themselves (Watt, 2006).

The 1960s heralded an era in which municipal councils became the most significant providers of public housing, and witnessed the gradual rise of housing associations that similarly formalised the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor dichotomy through allocation procedures and tenancy agreements (McDermont, 2004). From the 1970s onwards a succession of governmental interventions have attempted to alleviate the socio-economic problems inherent within Britain’s impoverished estates and have further intensified the social control function of housing management (Murie, 1997; Brown, 2004). Nonetheless, it was the 1980s and the ascendancy of the New Right that witnessed some of the most significant changes within the social housing sector (Cole and Furbey, 1994).

It was the ‘respectable’ tenants that benefitted from the ‘right to buy’ initiatives of the 1980s, whereas those unable to partake in homeownership were left within the increasingly residualised public housing sector (Ravetz, 2001). The Conservative and New Labour government’s emphasis upon the accountability of social housing providers and the concomitant focus upon tenants’ empowerment through rights and responsibilities (contractual governance) represent the most striking discontinuity within the governance of conduct through housing interventions (Flint, 2006). For instance, up until the late 1970s local authorities exercised ‘complete autonomy’ in regards to the management of social housing tenants (Card, 2006: 51). However, the 1980 Housing Act gave public sector tenants the security of tenure right which gave them the same legal protection as private renters, and significantly lessened the previous powers local authorities had for evicting problematic households (Burney, 1999).

From the late 1980s onwards these problematic tenants were considered to be formative members of a culturally distinct and ‘morally suspect’ underclass, responsible for the anti-social and criminal behaviour inherent within some of Britain’s social housing estates (Card, 2006: 52-53). In order to address these problematic populations, the grounds for possession were strengthened through the 1996 Housing Act. This Act returned to landlords the eviction powers that were restricted by the security of tenure measures introduced in the 1980s, and through the
utilisation of introductory/probationary tenancies inserted ‘behavioural regulations into the core of the tenancy agreement’ (Crawford, 2009: 824). Inherent within tenancy agreements are discourses of social control that aim to ‘balance’ communities through promulgating morally acceptable standards of behaviour (Haworth and Manzi, 1999). Although these behavioural regulations through the threat of eviction have the ‘greatest leverage over families’ (Squires, 2008, p. 16), there remains a dearth of research into the experiences of those living under such sanctions (Stephen and Squires, 2004; Nixon and Parr, 2006; Hunter et al., 2007a; Bond-Taylor, 2014), a significant lacuna that the findings chapters of this interpretive research will address (see Chapter 5, 6 and 7).

The emphasis on both the empowerment and behavioural control of council tenants (Haworth and Manzi, 1999) intensified with the election of the communitarian inspired New Labour government in 1997, and a plethora of legislation was introduced to alleviate ASB and social exclusion. These ASB and social exclusion initiatives were framed within the context of New Labour’s Respect Agenda and represented the latest manifestation of ‘respectable’ fears over inadequate working-class parenting (Pearson, 1983, 2009). The advent of the New Labour administration also witnessed the continuation and proliferation of the privatisation processes and saw housing associations become significant providers of accommodation within the residualised social housing sector (Ginsburg, 2005).

In regards to the disciplinary role of gender, originally the management of problematic tenants largely involved home visitation by female staff to inspect domestic standards and parenting practices, however, eviction was perceived as the last resort (Burney, 1999; Taylor and Rogaly, 2007). Following the Second World War, these disruptive households became known as ‘problem families’ and were placed together on the same estates which served to exacerbate the socio-economic problems inherent within these localities. These ‘problem families’ were continually perceived as the progenitor of criminal and anti-social behaviour within criminological and psychological longitudinal research (Burney and Gelsthorpe, 2008). In a similar vein to their Victorian antecedents these discourses primarily focused upon inadequate parenting practices especially in regards to mothering (Starkey, 2000; Carr, 2007; 2010). These moralistic judgements over housekeeping and parenting practices remain a significant element of the TFP interventions.
This perceived lack of the disciplinary role of gender was particularly evident in the ‘underclass’
thories of the late 1980s and beyond (Campbell, 1993), and retained a pervasive influence
within New Labour’s familial policies to alleviate ASB and social exclusion (Gillies, 2005).
Moreover, this berating and blaming of primarily lone-female parents (and their children) has
continued unabated and again is readily apparent within more contemporary governmental policy
and rhetoric (McKenzie, 2014, 2015; Tyler, 2013a, 2013b). Moreover, the TFP and FIPs
continue to hold primarily poor, white, working-class, lone females, accountable for the
problematic behaviour of males both within and outside the home (Carr, 2007; 2010; Garrett,
2007a; Nixon and Hunter, 2009). This continuing historical process of holding females
accountable for the behaviour of males omits a consideration of structural constraints (Gillies,
2005; Parr, 2009), or that there exists a fine line between the perpetrators and victims of ASB
especially those with underlying mental health issues (BIBIC, 2007; Hunter et al., 2007a, 2007b;
Matthews et al., 2007; Manders, 2010). Moreover, there remains a dearth of qualitative research
into the specific problems that prompt social landlords to utilise their ASB powers (Hunter et al.,
2007a) and this omission will be addressed and extended in Chapter 5 of this thesis. Nonetheless,
concerns over the marginalised inhabitants that remain in the residualised social housing sector
and the usage of the threat of eviction and/or eviction, and the concomitant utilisation of FIPs,
are set to continue because they are framed within a historical discourse that situates the
‘problem family’, and now the ‘troubled’ family, as both the primary cause and solution to ASB
and criminality (Parr, 2009; Bond-Taylor, 2014). Furthermore, and as these two chapters on the
history of social housing have noted throughout, ‘definitions of anti-social or problematic
behaviour that have emerged over time have been informed not only by the managerial concerns
of municipal landlords but also by the perceived characteristics of those being housed and the
wider political discourses of the time’ (Card, 2006: 53 emphasis added)
CHAPTER 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

As noted in the introduction to this thesis, and further reiterated in the literature review in Chapter 3, a recurring theme within successive governmental policies and rhetoric is that the prevalence of anti-social behaviour (and crime more generally) within impoverished communities is considered the corollary of a minority of ‘troubled’ families. These families are deemed as the progenitors of ASB and require increased and early (even pre-natal) state and non-state intervention into their lives (Home Office, 2008; Cameron, 2011b). It has been suggested, however, that despite significant interest from politicians, the media and academics, the experiences and opinions of those on the receiving end of ASB/parenting interventions have been largely omitted (Morris and Featherstone, 2010; Morris, 2013; Bond-Taylor, 2014). It has also been noted that there exists a fine line between the perpetrators and victims of ASB especially those with underlying mental health issues (Matthews et al., 2007; Manders, 2010; Nixon and Prior, 2010). The few exemplars of research that have investigated the impact of ASB interventions have noted the gendered aspects to the phenomenon, for instance, lone mothers (because of the behaviour of other members of their household) are often the primary recipients of such measures, through evictions and/or referrals to FIPs (see Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Carr, 2007; 2010; Parr, 2011; Bond-Taylor, 2014).

Nonetheless, there has largely been a dearth of academic attention paid to the gendered aspects of FIPs (Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Carr, 2007; 2010; Nixon and Prior, 2010; Bond-Taylor, 2014). There also remains a distinct lack of qualitative research into the specific problems that prompt social landlords to utilise their ASB powers (Hunter et al. 2007a). This research addresses these significant lacunae by empirically examining and eliciting the experiences and responses of those evicted or threatened with eviction by their local housing association/local authority because of the ASB of other members of their household.
This methodology chapter will provide a detailed discussion of my overall research strategy; as such it will firstly focus upon the aims and objectives of the study and the framing of the major research question. This chapter will then continue with a consideration of the research location and the demographics of the participants. The chapter will then discuss how the participants were sampled and recruited; the utility of, and justification for, the intensive semi-structured interviews that were employed; how the research questions and interview schedule were designed; and how the interview data ‘generated’ were subsequently coded and analysed and finally my ethical considerations.

4.2 Research Strategy

The primary aims and objectives of this qualitative research were to investigate in-depth the experiences and responses of parent/s to the interventions to which they are subjected, and examine whether social policy and criminal justice initiatives targeted at families within the social housing sector are the consequence of wider social and economic issues. As Squires wisely suggests, ‘anti-social behaviour is emphatically about perceptions, relationships and interactions and contexts’ (2008: 368). In order to facilitate the examination of perceptions, relationships, interactions and contexts this research utilised intensive semi-structured interviews and was informed by variants of the interpretive insights of social constructionism (see Harris, 2006) and interpretive interactionism (see Denzin, 1989, 1992, 2001). These interpretive insights were employed as sensitizing concepts that ‘merely suggest directions along which to look’ instead of providing ‘descriptions of what to see’ (Blumer, 1954, cited by Schwandt, 1998: 221; Charmaz, 2006). Indeed, and as Morris (2013: 200) notes, from her research with ‘troubled’ families, ‘the underdeveloped nature of existing family experiences justify the exploratory approach adopted’.

According to Mason (1996), despite its eclectic nature, it is useful to provide a loose working definition of the common elements of qualitative research. Qualitative research is based upon a broadly interpretivist philosophical position that considers how the multifaceted and meaningful social world is interpreted, experienced, produced or understood. Moreover, qualitative research utilises data generation methods that are sensitive to the social context that engenders the data, and as such are flexible, systematic, rigorous, and reflexive forms of inquiry. For Harris (2006:
224), it is the importance of meaning and relativity that unites the majority of scholars from various and often contradictory interpretive perspectives\textsuperscript{35}, in particular, the recognition that people inhabit ‘socially constructed realities’ - in worlds of objects whose meaning is indeterminate until ordered in social interaction’. Moreover, this emphasis upon meaning and investigations of ‘what people “know” and how they create, apply, contest, and act upon those ideas’ are the most salient concerns of the social constructionist perspective (ibid: 225 original emphasis).

In direct relation to the analytical focus of my research into the parent/s’ experiences of being threatened with eviction or evicted, Harris cites the following as exemplars of phenomena relativized through social constructionist studies: the self (see Goffman, 1959; Holstein and Gubrium, 2000); deviance (see Becker, [1963] 1991); the family (see Gubrium and Holstein, 1990); and social problems (see Best, 1995). In regards to the ‘troubled family’ and social problems more generally, even the most cursory reading of my literature review will note the socially constructed and arbitrary nature of these concepts. For example, societal perceptions of ASB, delinquency and the family are historically specific (see Goldson and Jamieson, 2002; Pearson, 2009), whilst contemporary concerns over ASB and parenting exemplify concerns over the construction of social problems through various claims makers (see Pfohl, 1985; Schneider and Ingram, 1993; Best, 1995). A common criticism of social constructionism however, is that the primarily discursive emphasis upon claims making ensures that the most marginalised in society are often overlooked (Collins, 1989; Best, 1995). As the literature review of this thesis noted, in regards to ASB, there remains a dearth of research into those vulnerable families on the receiving end of these claims and subsequent interventions. This interpretive thesis has contributed to addressing this imbalance.

At this juncture, it should be recognised that the appellations social constructivism and social constructionism are often employed interchangeably within academic literature. For Puig \textit{et al.}, (2008), Schwandt (2001) provides a useful distinction between the two forms of constructivism; the first is psychological constructivism which concentrates on individual cognition, whereas the

\textsuperscript{35} As Harris (2006) notes, symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, narrative and frame analysis, discourse analysis, cultural studies, cognitive sociology and postmodernism are all approaches that focus upon meaning and interpretation.
second (social constructionism) is primarily concerned with interaction and social processes. The methodology of this research is framed by the concerns of the latter version of social constructionism and how meaning is engendered through the complex ‘interplay between humans engaging with their human world’ (Schwandt, 2001, cited by Puig et al., 2008: 140). How this complex interplay is mediated through social life is also of primary concern to those who adhere to variants of symbolic interactionism (see Denzin, 1989, 1992, 2001). According to Charmaz (2006), symbolic interactionism represents a social constructionist perspective through the assumption that reality and meaning are produced through individual and collective processes (see also Blumer, 1971). Essentially, as Stephen and Squires (2003) suggest, symbolic interactionism considers human beings as purposive agents confronting a world that necessitates interpretation, and as such examines how individuals comprehend their world and how these meanings are subsequently used as tools for forming and guiding action. Moreover, the primary reason for using variants of this perspective to investigate the experiences of those threatened with eviction (following the ASB of other members of their household) is because symbolic interactionism considers how social identities and roles are engendered through interaction.

A common, and for some unwarranted, criticism of symbolic interactionism is that it negates an adequate comprehension of social structure and power (Dennis and Martin, 2005). Bearing this criticism in mind, I explored Denzin’s (1989, 1992, 2001) interpretive interactionism, a version of symbolic interactionism which attempts to combine the traditional forms of the perspective with the phenomenological, hermeneutical insights of Heidegger (1962) [1927]), and the critical-biographical method advocated by C. Wright Mills (1959), Sartre (1981), and Merleau-Ponty (1973). For Denzin, this blending of symbolic interactionist and phenomenological insights refutes positivist premises and assumes that the language used by people in their everyday lives can be used to elucidate their experiences. These experiences are illuminated by the interpretive researcher through the narratives of the participants:

Interpretive researchers collect two basic types of narratives: personal experience stories and self-stories. A personal experience story is a narrative that relates the self of the teller to a significant set of personal experiences that have already occurred...A self-story is a narrative that creates and interprets a structure of experience as it is being told...Self-stories deal simultaneously
with the past, the present, and the future, whereas personal experience stories deal only with the past. Self-stories involve ongoing problematic occurrences in their tellers’ lives. (Denzin, 2001: 60-61 original emphasis).

This thesis employs elements of both these forms of narrative to explicate the parent/s’ experiences of being threatened with eviction or actually evicted. As Schwandt (1998: 235) notes, Denzin also draws upon the poststructural insights of cultural and feminist studies, for example, from the former he emphasises the salience of focusing upon ‘how interacting individuals connect their lived experiences to the cultural representations of those experiences’. This has particular resonance for households deemed as ‘anti-social’, for example, I wanted to examine whether those threatened with eviction conceptualise their experiences within wider context of parenting or ‘neighbours from hell’ discourses (see Field, 2003; Cameron, 2011a; 2011b). As regards the latter, feminist studies have also provided a sustained critique of positivist assumptions (see Olesen, 2000), and a ‘phenomenologically, existentially driven view of humans and society [that] positions self, emotionality, power, ideology, violence, and sexuality at the centre of the interactionist’s interpretive problems’ (Denzin, 1992, cited by Schwandt, 1998: 235).

My overall research questions specifically aimed at qualitatively examining how parent/s mediated the familial consequences of the eviction process, and consider their experiences of a local FIP more generally. In particular, I wanted to ascertain how the parent/s’ experiences of a ‘problematic turning point’ (written notification threatening eviction) were ‘organized, perceived, constructed, and given meaning by interacting individuals’ (Denzin, 2001: 71). In regards to ASB, this consideration of problematic turning points or epiphanies through the participants’ life experiences (see Denzin, 1989; 2001) has a certain utility for those undertaking qualitative research into the phenomenon:

...anti-social behaviour is not easily defined, but in studies of ‘causes’, it appears to be taken as an objective phenomenon readily available to the researcher. By problematising this concept and the notion of causality... assumptions of straight-forward cause and effect mechanisms are quickly dissolved. The notion of ‘epiphanies’ therefore facilitates
For Denzin (1989: 49), there are also particular steps that can be taken when framing a research question: locating from your own personal biography ‘the problematic biographical experience to be studied’; following Mills’ (1959) seminal sociological mantra and locating how the problem (experienced as a private trouble) has become a public issue; locate the places where the people being researched can be found; asking how, not why these events have occurred; and as I have done above, making your research question into a singular statement. As for the first of Denzin’s proposals regarding personal biography, and as noted in the introduction, I have always resided in social housing (in both its local authority and housing association forms), was raised in poverty by a single mother, come from an extremely ‘troubled’ family and had a misspent youth that would have been undoubtedly labelled as ‘anti-social’ in the current climate. I have also previously received an eviction notice for rent arrears and found the experience thoroughly distressing. Nonetheless, as I still reside in, and encounter the vicissitudes of social housing on a regular basis, I neither want to romanticize nor demonize further those living under the threat of eviction. For Bourdieu et al., (1999: 610), social proximity and familiarity with the participants of the study has certain advantages and ‘guarantees against having the threat of having subjective reasoning reduced to objective causes, and having choices experienced as free turned into objective determinisms uncovered by analysis’.

As regards Denzin’s second point, my literature review noted how a collection of private troubles have become grouped together under the appellation of ‘anti-social behaviour’. Denzin’s third point, however, is more problematic. For example, in order to locate those threatened with eviction I contacted a local charity that undertakes Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) and gained access to the participants (see below). In regards to Denzin’s penultimate point regarding the framing of the research question, in order to examine how the parent/s became involved in their problematic situation I formulated a focused interview schedule (see later in this Chapter and Appendix 2).
4.3 Recruiting Participant Sample and the Research Location

This research was primarily concerned with examining and eliciting the experiences and responses of those at risk of eviction (or recently evicted) from social housing on the basis of the ASB of other members of their household. The serving of ASB sanctions can also include the sending of letters threatening eviction to the named tenant of the household regardless of whether or not they have committed ASB (see Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Stephen and Squires, 2003). Thus, the threat of eviction is delivered to a person other than the individual who has initially been considered to have committed the ASB. In light of this consideration, I adopted a purposive sampling strategy and interviewed adult tenants about their experiences of actually being evicted or receiving an eviction notice and this included both lone-parents and couples. The key workers passed on the research advertisement and information sheet (see Appendix 2 and 4) to parent/s they were working with and, if they declared an interest, I personally phoned them to arrange the interview. The only requirement I specified to the key workers was that they had to have been threatened with eviction or actually evicted. I was initially somewhat perturbed by this reliance upon the key workers in securing access, and did not only want the participants who were positive about their FIP interventions. However, as the findings chapters of this thesis will reveal, these concerns were unwarranted as some were far from positive about the FIP, and fortunately all but one of the parent/s who were working with the FIP at the time of my research agreed to partake. It has been noted in similar research into vulnerable families’ experiences of their multi-agency interactions, that there was considerable resistance from staff when the researchers attempted to gain access to their clients (see Morris, 2013). The FIP key workers and managers were thoroughly helpful in providing participants for my research, however, some did attempt to probe for further information (see the Ethical Considerations section of this chapter).

All of the participants other than one couple, who were at future ‘risk’ of eviction because of the ASB of their son, had either been evicted or threatened with eviction prior to commencing work with the FIP. The parent/s were all on either ‘action plans ‘or ‘acceptable behaviour’ contracts with the FIP and these were largely specific to alleviating their children’s form of ASB and the concomitant necessity for improving parenting practices and setting boundaries (see Chapter 6).

The purposeful sample of adult participants were recruited through the FIP key workers from a local family-orientated charity that provides a variety of services to alleviate the risk of
homelessness and familial breakdown. I recruited parent/s at various stages of their intervention to examine their initial and subsequent experiences of living under the threat of eviction and their experiences of the FIP more generally. In total, 17 participants were invited to partake in this study and the in-depth semi-structured interviews lasted between an hour and an hour and half. Three parent/s were interviewed for a second time for points of clarification (see findings chapters) and in total twenty interviews were undertaken in a private room at the charity’s premises, without the key worker present. The interviews were undertaken between September 2011 and May 2012, and the charity’s FIP is still currently working in conjunction with the local authority. For the purposes of anonymity, the city in which this research was undertaken will be referred to throughout this thesis by the pseudonym of ‘South City’.

The FIP is part of the charity and provides the following housing services, however, these services are not mutually exclusive and although all the participants were working with the FIP some were also involved with the other services below. The charity’s FIP is part of the Troubled Families Programme (TFP) and aims to reduce ASB from a small number of families in the local community who are at risk of being evicted from their homes, or have recently been evicted. The FIP is available to families in the local area with at least one child under the age of eighteen. The intervention with the families involved lasts for a period of between six months and a year. The project also aims to support families who have resisted support in the past and who have multiple and complex needs. However, as will be noted in Chapter 5 of this thesis, the majority of the parent/s had long histories of statutory and non-statutory interventions. The FIP also provides a Strengthening Families course designed for parents and their children and is predicated upon the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program, a family and parenting support program that is designed to ‘treat’ and prevent emotional and behaviour problems in young people (see Chapter 7).

The Temporary Accommodation Service (TAS), works in partnership with South City Housing Service to provide self-contained temporary accommodation for homeless families and vulnerable single people who are being accommodated whilst awaiting a decision on their eligibility for local authority housing. Several of the parent/s were living or had previously lived in this form of temporary accommodation. The Supported Housing Service (SHS) also provides support and accommodation to vulnerable families and its remit is to enable them to maintain
their own tenancy and then get a secure tenancy with South City Council. This housing service could also include the charity managing probationary or Family Intervention Tenancies (FITs) prior to people being given local authority housing. Finally, the Tenancy Support Service (TSS) provides floating support to families who may be at risk of losing their homes, or may benefit from learning skills in order to manage their homes more effectively and independently.

4.4 Demographics of the Participants

The following demographics come from general information provided by the parent/s (see the participants’ portraits in Appendix 1). In regards to the ethnicity of those interviewed, all considered themselves to be from a white British background as opposed to the 91 per cent of the participants in the White et al., (2008) evaluation of FIPs. The city in which the participants resided however, according to the 2011 Census, has a population that is 84 per cent white British compared with the national average of 91.3 per cent. As previously noted, for the sake of anonymity this city will be referred to through the pseudonym of ‘South City’. The local figures that now follow were all provided by South City’s ‘Anti-Poverty Strategy’ (2015) which was commissioned by the local authority, however, because of issues of anonymity it will not be possible to fully reference these details. In regards to type of housing tenure, just over three quarters of the participants in the White et al., (ibid) research were social housing tenants compared to all but one of the participants in my research. It is difficult to account for this difference as South City has 19 per cent of its inhabitants residing in social housing which is only slightly higher than the national average of 18 per cent.

There were marked differences in relation to the composition of households, for example, in the White et al., study (ibid) 56 per cent of the families involved had more than three children as opposed to only one in my research. This difference is possibly due to the fact that several had other adult children who no longer lived with them. In my research over three-quarters of the households were headed by a single parent compared with 69 per cent in the White et al., study, however, 62 per cent of these households in the White et al., evaluation (ibid) were headed by lone females compared with over three-quarters of the households in my sample. I was not able to locate specific data on the proportion of lone female-headed households in South City but found that 7.5 per cent of its households were headed by a lone parent compared to 6.5 per cent
of households in England and Wales. Significantly, 62 per cent of the households in the White et al., evaluation (ibid) had no working adult. However, the city in which I undertook my research has 12 per cent of its working age population claiming benefits which is considerably higher than the South East average of 9.7 per cent. All of those interviewed were claiming benefits and only one participant was working (part-time). Moreover, all of the participants in my research inhabited the poorest wards in South City where 31.6 per cent of working age adults are claiming out of work benefits. In 2012, 22.3 per cent of all children in South City (aged 0-19) were deemed as living in poverty, compared to 18.6 per cent in England and 13.6 per cent in the South East. However, in the poorest wards in South City 44.2 per cent of children were living in poverty.

It was noted in the literature review that White et al., (2008) identified various risk factors that led to their participants being referred to the FIP such as familial breakdown, domestic violence, mental health issues and substance misuse. In regards to familial breakdown, 27 per cent of the participants in White et al., evaluation (ibid) reported familial breakdown compared with half of the participants in my research. As for domestic violence, White et al., (ibid) found that 25 per cent reported histories of domestic violence, whereas Nixon et al., (2006a, 2006b) noted that 47 per cent came from domestic violence backgrounds. Significantly however, over two-thirds of my respondents had been subjected to forms of domestic violence and over half of these reported incidents of ongoing parental abuse from their children (see Chapter 6). In regards to mental health issues, three-quarters of those in my research reported suffering from depression compared to 69 per cent in the White et al., (ibid) study. Whereas 34 per cent of the children in their evaluation had ADHD (ibid), half of the parent/s in my research believed their children had undiagnosed mental health issues such as ADHD and Asperger’s Syndrome. Surprisingly, none of the participants in my research reported general physical health problems unlike 63 per cent of the participants in the White et al., evaluation (ibid), but the figures for drug misuse were congruent at just over a third. Moreover, a quarter of those in my research had recently experienced a family bereavement and cited this as a factor that had detrimentally impacted upon their parenting practices (see Chapter 5).
4.5 Data Generation through Intensive Interviewing

Following on from Denzin’s (1989) contentions regarding the initial framing of the research question, I also adopted Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2009: 101-102) advice for undertaking a qualitative interview-based study. For Kvale and Brinkmann, there are seven stages to an interview-based study: Thematizing, Designing, Interviewing, Transcribing, Analyzing, Verifying, and Reporting. Thematizing is similar to Denzin’s (1989; 2001) framing of the research question and regards formulating the purpose of the research prior to interviewing, and clarifying the research question before considering the ‘how’ question of the method employed. The Designing stage of the interview study encompasses all seven stages and the overall design should be capable of engendering the knowledge required for the study and also consider the moral implications of the research (see the Ethical Considerations section of this chapter). The Interviewing stage pertains to the development of an interview guide and should have a ‘reflective approach to the knowledge sought and the interpersonal relation of the interview situation’ (ibid: 102). The Transcribing stage refers to the preparation of data for analysis through the transcription of oral speech into written text. This Analyzing of the interview data should be undertaken in regards to the purpose of the research and the selection of appropriate modes of analysis (see data analysis section of this chapter). The Verifying stage pertains to the generalizability, reliability and validity of the research study and these are aspects considered in the final Reporting stage of the process, in which the study’s findings are presented for academic scrutiny.

For Mason (1996: 39-40) however, the decision to use qualitative interviewing as a data generation method should be predicated upon the researcher’s ontological and epistemological concerns, how they conceptualize their role in the research process, and more practical reasons. For instance, my ontological stance suggests that the participants’ interactions, experiences, understandings, and knowledge are meaningful elements of the social phenomena that my research questions are intended to examine. In relation to my epistemological stance, I maintain that a justifiable way to generate knowledge based upon these ontological considerations is through interaction, namely, talking and listening to the participants to gain a comprehension of their experiences through their narrative accounts. Furthermore, this epistemological stance maintains that the interview is a social interaction and inseparable from the context in which it
was produced, and that to perceive of this interaction as a form of bias that can be potentially controlled for is of less importance than comprehending the complexities inherent within the interaction (see also Bourdieu et al., 1999).

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), this epistemological stance to qualitative interviewing has seven interrelated components: that interview knowledge is produced; relational; conversational; contextual; linguistic; narrative; and pragmatic. As regards knowledge as produced, knowledge is engendered through the constructed interaction between interviewer and interviewee and as such co-authored by those involved in the study. The knowledge as relational component acknowledges that the knowledge generated is both inter-relational and inter-subjective and that the interviewing process ‘establishes new relations in the human webs of interlocution’ (ibid: 53). The knowledge as conversational component suggests that knowledge of the social world can be potentially obtained through interviewing that produces narrative accounts of lived experiences. However, there is no guarantee that knowledge produced in one particular situation can be replicated in another so the knowledge and meaning obtained is determined by the interpersonal context. Moreover, in relation to knowledge as linguistic, because ‘language is the medium of interview research’ the knowledge is produced through oral statements and analysed after transcription linguistically (ibid: 56). The knowledge as narrative component essentially means that the stories and accounts produced during the qualitative interview provide a salient tool for eliciting meaning. Finally, the knowledge as pragmatic component focuses upon the legitimacy of scientific knowledge. For example, the question of whether or not a study produces scientific or ‘true’ knowledge is substituted with a pragmatic concern for useful knowledge, however, what constitutes ‘useful’ knowledge is considered an ethical and value laden issue.

Following Mason (1996: 41-42 original emphasis), I would conceptualize myself as ‘active and reflexive in the process of data generation, rather than as a neutral collector’, and as such examined my role in the research process. This critical examination of my role in the research entailed the compilation of a research diary during the interviewing stage of the project and through reflexive coding during the data analysis process. The practical reasoning behind selecting interviewing as a data generating technique is primarily based upon the fact that direct
observation of those threatened with eviction is not a viable or perhaps even ethical option, and because a survey questionnaire would not facilitate an in-depth exploration of their experiences.

In summary, my epistemological position differs from ‘positivist assumptions’ that maintain that causal explanations and knowledge are only obtainable through generalizations and laws, which are based upon the gathering of ‘facts’ derived from controlled experiments or objective observation (Stephen and Squires, 2003: 24). In line with Stephen and Squires’ (2003) contention, from their research into families’ experiences of the ABC process, the focal point of my qualitative research is understanding and interpretation. In order to facilitate this focus upon understanding and interpretation this thesis adopted a variant of social constructionism, through a phenomenological approach to qualitative interviewing. Phenomenology is concerned with an empathetic understanding of social phenomena from the perspective of those involved and utilises a semi-structured interview format (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). As Stephen and Squires note of their research into the ABC process, my primary reason for adopting a phenomenological approach was to elicit the lived experiences or lifeworld (see Husserl, 1970) of those threatened with eviction:

That is, coming to appreciate the inter-subjective world of human experience and social action as constituted by the thoughts and acts of the subjects of the research themselves. This desire to ‘get close’ was prerequisite to exploring the families’ life experiences, the meanings, values and ideas they associate with these experiences, and the ways through which they negotiate their social life, particularly in terms of their objectively and externally defined ‘anti-social behaviour’. (Stephen and Squires, 2003: 25-26)

This thesis will adopt a phenomenologically inspired semi-structured format to elicit an in-depth comprehension of each participant’s experiences of living under the threat of eviction, and/or eviction because of the ASB of other members of their household. In order to achieve this in-depth comprehension of the parent/s’ experiences of living under the threat of eviction, I also utilised Charmaz’s (2006) advice regarding the efficacy of intensive interviewing. As Charmaz notes (2006: 25-27), the intensive interview represents ‘a directed conversation’ (see also Lofland et al., 2006) that aims to elicit the participants’ interpretation of their experiences. Furthermore, the semi-structured intensive interview also provides the following advantages to
the interpretive researcher that are not available with the standardized questionnaire format: the ability to go beyond the surface of the participants’ descriptions; further exploring a topic or statement and/or request further clarification or detail; examine the participants’ actions, feelings and thoughts; keep the participant on the relevant topic and check for accuracy by restating the participants’ point; determine the pace of the interview; change the topic; use social and observational skills to continue the discussion; and express to the participant your gratitude for their involvement. The intensive semi-structured format can also have the following advantages for the participants themselves: being able to express their views and breaking silences; reflecting on past events; determine what they tell and how; express feelings and thoughts that may not be possible to discuss in other settings or relationships and receive understanding. As noted throughout this thesis, the primary aim of this interpretive research is to give those on the receiving end of ASB housing sanctions a much needed voice and express in their terms the familial consequences of the eviction process.

### 4.6 Designing the Interview Schedule

The research questions formulated for this project (see interview schedule in Appendix 3) were adapted from Stephen and Squires’ (2003) research and aimed to examine both the positive and detrimental consequences of housing interventions for ASB upon the familial interactions, relationships and parenting practices of those involved. For instance, I designed my interview schedule with questions that firstly probed for background information on their housing history over the previous five years. This was followed by questions that aimed directly to elicit the effects of the eviction process (see Chapter 6) upon their familial interactions and relationships. The next set of questions was specifically formulated to encapsulate their initial and subsequent feelings after receiving the threat of eviction notice. The penultimate sequence of questions focused upon their involvement with different agencies both prior to and since the threat of eviction. To further examine the impact of the threat of eviction and their FIP involvements the final set of questions offered the parent/s the opportunity to suggest preventative measures that could have possibly prevented their current situation, more general recommendations and the chance to discuss any further points.
4.7 Data Coding and Analysis

This thesis adopted cross-sectional or categorical indexing to initially code the interview data generated (see Mason, 1996; Arksey and Knight, 1999), and then utilised Lieblich et al.’s (1998) form of narrative analysis. Essentially, my initial coding categories were developed to ‘focus and organize the retrieval of sections of text, or elements of data, for the purpose of some form of further [comparative] analysis or manipulation’ (Mason, 1996: 111 original emphasis). In order to facilitate this further analysis, I also employed code memos to provide definitions of the codes used, make comparisons between codes, and provide a consideration of my analytical reasons for developing specific codes (Charmaz, 2006; Gibbs, 2007).

According to Mason (1996), the decision to use a cross-sectional and categorical indexing system as a coding procedure should be made for practical reasons and to establish the utility of the data for answering your research questions. Following Mason, my practical reason for adopting cross-sectional indexing was to enable the retrieval of themes, issues, topics and more general demographic information. In regards to my research questions, the cross-sectional indexing of the interview data facilitated the commencement of the interpretive process through the location and development of analytical categories and themes. As such, the interview data generated was coded for specific events, strategies, meanings, relationships, consequences, and my own reflexive considerations of the research process. The task of indexing and retrieving these analytical categories and themes was undertaken manually and all the interviews were transcribed verbatim.

According to Lieblich et al., (1998), there are two overlapping aspects to narrative analysis; the first relates to the unit of analysis and whether it is categorical or holistic. The holistic approach focuses upon the narrative as a whole, whilst a categorical approach focuses upon all references to the phenomenon being examined. This thesis adopted a categorical approach to narrative analysis and looked for comparisons across the interviews in relation to the parent/s’ experiences of being threatened with eviction and/or evicted. The second aspect, for Lieblich et al., pertains to the focus of the analysis and can either be concerned with the content or form of the narrative. A consideration of the form of the narrative essentially concentrates on language and structure, whereas the content aspect adopted in this thesis concentrated on key events, reactions and
motives. The analysis of the data generated during this research was undertaken through what Kvale and Brinkmann refer to as an eclectic or bricolage theoretical approach to interview analysis:

Many analyses of interviews are conducted without following any specific analytic technique. Some go beyond reliance on a single mode of analysis to include a free mixture of methods and techniques. Other interview analyses do not apply specific analytic procedures, but rest on a general reading of the interview texts with theoretically informed interpretations. Knowledge of the subject matter of analysis here carries more weight than the application of specific analytical techniques... *The bricolage interpreter adapts mixed technical discourses, moving freely between different analytic techniques and concepts.* (2009: 233 emphasis added)

My primary reason for adopting this bricolage approach to data analysis is because the reliance upon a single mode of theoretical analysis would possibly fail to acknowledge the complex interplay between the dynamics of class, gender and white ethnicity, that are all inherent within the phenomenon of ‘anti-social behaviour’ (see Chapter 1).

**4.8 Ethical Considerations**

As Kvale and Brinkmann (2009: 62-63) contend, ‘interview research is saturated with moral and ethical issues’ that require consideration throughout the seven stages of the research interview process noted earlier. For instance, during the *Thematizing* stage the purpose of the research should be considered in relation to improving ‘the human condition investigated’ (ibid: 62), rather than just being concerned with the advancement of academic knowledge. The *Designing* stage includes maintaining confidentiality and obtaining the informed consent of the participants. During the actual *Interview Situation* a consideration of the possible distress of the participants is also required (see also Lee, 1993). The *Transcription* stage of the project involves ensuring the confidentiality of those involved, whilst during the *Analysis* stage the extent to which the participants are permitted to comment on or amend how their statements have been interpreted requires addressing. All of the participants in my research were offered transcribed versions of their interviews but all declined the offer to receive them. In the *Verification* stage the researcher
should ‘report knowledge that is as verifiable as possible’ (ibid: 63), which involves the ethical issue of how critically the interviewee should be questioned. The veracity of the participants’ narratives is a particularly salient point as previous research into the experiences of ‘troubled’ families noted such families are well versed in ‘the stage management of “routine family life” to present a false account to professionals’ (Morris, 2013: 203). In order to confirm the veracity of the claims made, if any doubtful or contradictory answers occurred, I probed further, and rephrased or returned to the question for points of clarification.

However, in my research it would have been unethical to seek confirmation from the key workers involved and would have breached the guarantee of confidentiality (see below). Moreover, some of the participants’ narratives contained admissions that they had not disclosed to their key worker because of fears of further sanctions (see findings chapters), so I did not want to detrimentally affect the levels of trust and rapport I had established with them. At times some of the key workers would also attempt to probe for further information about the families involved, but I would steer the conversation away from the subject to avoid being ethically compromised. I also adhered to Parr’s intuitive ethical advice from her research into women’s experiences of intensive family support:

Ethical considerations were important during the interviews with these women given their vulnerability and the sensitive nature of the research topic…This brought to the fore my ethical responsibility to find ways not only to attempt to balance the unequal power relations which framed the interviews but also to respond to the women in appropriate manner when they imparted painful, difficult and sometimes harrowing stories. I did this by positioning myself as relatively uninformed; ensured the interview was conducted in an informal and flexible manner that allowed the women to talk about what was important to them in order to create an atmosphere of respect; and engendered a two-way relationship through an element of self-disclosure where I tried to give something back to the women in return for the information they gave me… (Parr, 2011: 724).

This element of self-disclosure included discussing my family’s problematic experiences of statutory and non-statutory interventions and also entailed reflecting upon my own ‘troubled youth’. Finally, and as discussed above, during the Reporting stage of the interview research process the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants has to be preserved to ensure there
are no negative consequences for those involved. This was achieved by using pseudonyms for all the participants and the research location and guaranteeing confidentiality throughout. A detailed consideration of ethical issues was undertaken throughout this research project and commenced with obtaining a favourable ethical opinion from my university’s ethics committee prior to starting the fieldwork. In order to achieve a favourable ethical opinion, this research project rigorously guaranteed the anonymity of the respondents by following the ethical guidelines of the Social Research Association (2003), the British Sociological Association (2004), and also advice garnered from the Chair of the British Society of Criminology (BSC) Ethics Committee. The primary reason for contacting the BSC for ethical advice was in relation to the possibility of those being interviewed reporting incidents of harm to themselves or to others (see Information Sheet in Appendix 4). For instance, I was made aware in brief background information provided by the key workers that some were experiencing forms of parental abuse, so unless they reported serious incidents of harm (fortunately none did), I would preserve their anonymity. Moreover, this entire research project was undertaken following the Code on Good Research Practice from the University of Surrey (2011). The laborious process of seeking ethical clearance involved the compilation of a detailed research protocol which considered the issues of confidentiality, anonymity, risk assessment (potential benefits and risks for participants and researcher), and culminated in the development of a letter advertising the research (see Appendix 2), interview guide (see Appendix 3) information sheets and informed consent forms (see Appendix 4).

Although the ethical clearance process was often frustrating it did provide the opportunity for an in-depth consideration of the ethical issues inherent within the research process. For instance, as regards the issue of anonymity, participants were not identified by their names but by participant code numbers and pseudonyms. Documents containing codes, names and addresses, as well as written consent forms were kept separately in strict accordance with current legislation, particularly the Data Protection Act (1998). The data generated (audio recordings and transcribed interviews) will be retained for 10 years in strict accordance with the DPA, and then destroyed. These points were clearly explained to participants before any interview took place (see Information Sheet in appendix 4). As noted above, this issue of confidentiality proved more problematic especially in regards to possible disclosures of harm to themselves or others. It was decided that in the event of any such disclosures, I would terminate the interview and discuss the
matter with my supervisors and the participant involved before continuing any further. As for the potential adverse effects, risks or hazards for the participants of this research these were primarily related to the interviewing process and the subject matter of ‘anti-social behaviour’.

In regards to the complex issue of ASB sanctions, as Stephen and Squires (2003: 29) note of their research, the participants were asked to ‘reflect upon aspects of their lives that may at best be uncomfortable and, at worst, deleterious with unknown consequences’. In consideration of this concern, I followed their advice and prioritised the human rights of the participants, namely, their right to self-determination, dignity and privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, and protection from harm and exploitation at any stage of the research process. Moreover, if at any stage during the interviews they became distressed the interview was to be suspended immediately and the participant asked if they would like to end the interview, or have a break and continue. Participants were assured that they could stop the interview without explanation at any time. All participants were also given leaflets with the details of appropriate agencies at the end of the interviews (such as contact details for their local CAB and Shelter). To ensure the safety of the researcher and avoid any potential risks, all of the interviews were undertaken at the charity’s premises. As for the potential benefits for research participants, this research provided them with the opportunity to discuss and reflect upon their experiences and responses to the threat of eviction and the FIP within a safe and non-exploitive environment.

The informed consent process commenced with the initial identification of possible research participants who were recruited through the FIP. At this stage the aims and intentions of the study were outlined, alongside the issues of confidentiality and informed consent. This was explained verbally and in written form in the information sheet provided to the prospective participants. If at this stage the participants agreed to partake in the research written informed consent was obtained from each person prior to commencing the interview. Before the interview commenced the aims of the study and possible risks and benefits were again verbally explained to the participants. At this stage it was again reiterated that participants could decline to partake in the study, terminate the interview at any stage, and were free to avoid answering any questions they may not wish to answer. All were also provided with the opportunity of having a further meeting to provide feedback and/or make amendments to the transcribed draft of their interview.
but none accepted this offer. In summary, this research undertook a detailed consideration of ethical issues throughout in order to protect the participants ‘from the dangers of misinterpretation’ (Bourdieu et al., 1999: 1).
CHAPTER 5

Becoming Labelled as an ‘Anti-Social’ Household in a Multi-Agency World

5.1 Introduction

As noted in the preceding chapters of this thesis, although there has been a plethora of attention emanating from political, media and academic interest into ASB and problematic parenting, the voices of the ‘troubled’ families requiring intervention remain unheard (Morris and Featherstone, 2010; Murray and Barnes, 2010; Morris, 2013; Taylor-Bond, 2014; inter alia). Bearing the above omission in mind, this thesis will now give those on the receiving end of ASB sanctions a much-needed voice and let them express in their own terms how they became involved in the eviction process. As such, this and the following findings chapters will examine how ‘troubled’ families ‘navigate their way through the maze of permissive and punitive policies and practices’ (Morris and Featherstone, 2010: 557), whilst illustrating the salience of the complex interplay or intersectionality between the dynamics of gender, class, and white ethnicity. As noted in the methodology chapter, all of the parent/s were white and on benefits, some were suffering from long-term depression and/or their children’s mental health issues, and predominantly lone-parent females.

This and the subsequent two findings chapters will address these impasses in the existing ASB literature, and adhere to Squires’ (2008) advice by focusing upon the participants’ perceptions, relationships, interactions and contexts both prior to and since becoming involved in the eviction process. The focus upon contexts will elucidate the longevity of the participants’ experiences of multi-agency interactions through the concepts of supervised freedom and the tutelary complex, whilst a consideration of their perceptions, relationships and interactions will illustrate how they mediate their ‘troubled’ family status. Despite variations in the stages of the eviction process all of the participants were being held responsible for ASB perpetrated by other members of their immediate household or relatives visiting their properties. The majority of the participants were
lone-female parents being held responsible for the ASB of their male children, although one estranged couple were threatened with eviction because of their daughter’s ASB.

However, to properly contextualize and examine these gendered processes and the events that led to the participants’ households becoming labelled as ‘anti-social’, it will be firstly necessary to consider their previous interactions with various tutelary agencies. The primary reason for this is because the participants I interviewed also revealed complex familial histories of various multi-agency interventions and from the outset have to be considered particularly vulnerable with high support needs. An in-depth analysis of what vulnerability and high support needs actually entail will be the initial focus of this chapter and will refute the government’s insistence that ‘many [troubled families] simply refused to co-operate with services’ (Casey, 2012: 54)\(^\text{36}\).

The participants’ narratives also revealed complex histories of socio-structural problems and intra-familial and intra-communal conflict and as such reiterate the futility of government distinctions between the victims and perpetrators of ASB (see also Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Taylor-Bond, 2014). Moreover, policy narratives focusing upon a parenting skills deficit approach also fail to recognise the ‘primary significance’ of emotional and psychological influences such as: troubled childhoods; bereavement; previous relationship discord; and exposure to domestic violence, which can all engender a dearth of confidence and self-esteem (Batty & Flint, 2012: 349). These policy discourses require challenging through research that actually ‘accesses these families’ experiences of the complex problems they face and the family interventions to which they are subjected’ (Bond-Taylor, 2014: 2).

This and the following findings chapters will exemplify the salience of these emotional and psychological influences for those involved in the eviction process and as such will enhance and extend academic considerations of ASB sanctions and the TFP more generally. Moreover, they will also emphasise the fine line between the perpetrators and victims of ASB; illustrate the participants’ perceptions of being silenced within their past and present multi-agency interactions; and demonstrate their experience of multi-agency fatigue as a corollary of the

\(^{36}\) Despite this assertion, Casey’s (2012) case studies of ‘troubled’ families contain a litany of references to the numerous statutory and non-statutory agencies already involved.
interventions they have been subjected to since being labelled as the anti-social ‘other’\textsuperscript{37}. This initial focus on the participants’ experiences of previous interactions with various agencies will be followed by \textit{their perceptions} of the actual events that led to their household becoming involved in the eviction process. These narratives will illustrate that the participants had in common a long and enduring ‘habitus of instability’ (Barker, 2016).

\textbf{5.2 The Participants’ Previous Experiences of ‘Supervised Freedom’}

\textit{‘In and out of our lives for years’}

Of the seventeen parent/s interviewed from fourteen households, all had been involved periodically with social services or other statutory agencies prior to receiving the threat of eviction or being evicted (see participants’ profiles in Appendix 1). The most common form of statutory intervention prior to the eviction process was social work (eleven out of fourteen households), and four of these households were involved with a combination of social workers, education welfare co-ordinators, mental health agencies and health visitors. Eight out of the fourteen households had been previously involved with the police and six of these were also involved with social services. Surprisingly, although twelve of the fourteen households were being held responsible for the ASB of their children only two households were involved with the local Youth Offending Team (YOT). In total, three households were actually evicted; two of these were couples and the other a lone-female parent who was actually evicted twice. Of the remaining eleven households all but one couple had received written notification threatening eviction from their council or housing association. This couple had been referred to the FIP by social services because their son’s ASB was putting their tenancy at ‘future risk’ but at the time of their interview no threat of eviction from the local authority had been received.

The following extracts are some of the participants’ experiences of previous multi-agency interventions. The predominant themes in relation to prior interventions that emerged from the participants’ narratives were related to the longevity of their families’ experiences of ‘supervised freedom’. This focus upon ‘supervised freedom’ will be illustrated through: their periodic

\textsuperscript{37} The term ‘other’ is employed in this thesis to illustrate how the marginalization and ongoing vulnerability of ‘troubled’ families is a factor largely omitted within governmental discourses (Levitas, 2012), and how this form of discursive ‘othering’ essentially ‘reinforces existing social and economic demarcations’ (Bond-Taylor, 2014: 7).
involvements with social services and other agencies; resentment and frustration with the lack of support they had received from these agencies, especially in regards to preventing eviction proceedings or curtailing the ASB of other members of their household; and where they did receive support, how the discontinuity with the professionals involved had negatively impacted upon their household. This and following chapters will outline the paradoxical relationships some of the participants had with statutory services, in which appeals for support are combined with multi-agency fatigue (see later in this chapter) and the desire to cope without any further interventions. In regards to the longevity of statutory interventions, the participants who had the longest histories of intervention were also the ones who were actually evicted from their properties. Lucy and Carl were evicted from their housing association property because of disputed ASB complaints against Carl, and had recently commenced working with the FIP. The couple had been referred to the FIP by social services and had previously contacted the local Community Legal Advice Centre (CLAC) for legal advice in regards to the eviction, and to file counter-claims that they were the real victims of ASB. Both Lucy and Carl insisted that they were ultimately evicted because they could not afford to report incidents of ASB by phone as they only had a ‘pay as you go’ mobile, and could not understand or complete the associated legal documentation of the eviction process. The couple also maintained that they would have self-referred to the FIP earlier but were unaware of the agency.

Carl was 30 years old and his partner Lucy, at 22 years old, was the youngest participant interviewed. At the time of their separate interviews the couple and their three children (under the age of six) were living in temporary accommodation provided by the FIP and expected to be made homeless as this temporary period was coming to an end. The couple had previously lived in their housing association property for thirteen months and Lucy was the sole tenancy holder. The move to this property was arranged through social workers because Lucy had left a previous relationship with a history of domestic violence which culminated with her ex-partner assaulting her whilst she was pregnant. During their separate interviews it became apparent that Lucy was far more resentful towards social services than her partner, and this was attributed by both of them to her previous involvement with social services and wider intra-familial conflict. This wider intra-familial conflict was further exacerbated by the fact that Lucy’s uncle was at the time serving a life sentence for murdering Lucy’s father. Several of the female participants commented upon how bereavement, ‘a neglected issue in policy and academic accounts’ of FIPs
(Batty and Flint, 2012: 349)\(^{38}\), was a primary factor that had negatively impacted upon their parenting practices. In particular, the emotional distress of bereavement and the grieving process were situated as the reasons for ‘going off the rails’ and not supervising their children properly, especially in regards to noise-related ASB.

Within the government literature on ‘troubled’ families the issue of family bereavement is noted as a factor for ‘the family becoming completely derailed’, but then used to temporally distinguish them from ‘other families’ who ‘would be expected to eventually recover and cope’ (Casey, 2012: 2). The significant issue of how the participants mediated the effects of the temporal demands being placed upon behavioural improvements will be returned to in Chapters 6 and 7. As the council had deemed the couple had made themselves intentionally homeless by being evicted for Carl’s alleged ASB, both consistently expressed their fears of possibly losing their children to the care system throughout their interviews:

I had social services involved even before my eldest was born and she is now five and when she was two months old my mum made sure that she was put into care and I did everything I could to get her back, it was a nightmare. My mum didn’t want me to get her back and said that she was better off in care. I hate her for that and now she blames Carl (partner) for us getting evicted so I’m not having much to do with her at the moment. My mum also has two other granddaughters in care at the moment. But I’m nothing like my sister, I would never want my kids in care, they put my girl in care for what they said would be four weeks but it ended up being eight weeks. So I have no faith in social workers all they do is take you kid’s away and lie. Sometimes I think they [the FIP] are just like social services and they are only there to stick their noses in. (Interview 10, Lucy)

The above extract illustrates not only the longevity of Lucy’s involvement with social services because of a previous battle to remove her child from the care system, but also in a contextual sense, her experiences of a history of considerable and ongoing wider intra-familial conflict. The extract also exemplifies Lucy’s lack of faith and resentment towards social services through these previous experiences of the care system, and how these past interactions had negatively

\(^{38}\) For a discussion of the deleterious consequences of bereavement and depression in regards to socially excluded and marginalised youth, see MacDonald and Shildrick (2013).
impacted upon her present day involvements with the FIP. Throughout her interview, Lucy bemoaned how the FIP were just like social services and were essentially ‘spying’ upon her family (see Chapters 6 and 7).

The issues of trust and coping without statutory surveillance are conjoined with Lucy’s fears of losing her children to the care system and the devastating effects this separation would have upon her household. The expression of fears regarding the care system and/or the spectre of homelessness through the perspective of their children’s well-being was a predominant theme within the participants’ narratives, and all exemplified a ‘habitus of instability’ (Barker, 2016) in their descriptions of the familial consequences of the eviction process (see Chapter 6). As Barker (2016: 668) suggests, Bourdieu’s (1990) conceptualisations of the group habitus facilitates a comprehension of how ‘a group of people who come from a range of experiences that are unified by a generalised instability and uncertainty…has been internalised and underscores their way of being in the world’. These fears and uncertainty over losing children to the care system are not unwarranted as there has been a proliferation in the number of children entering the care system in the UK. Moreover, and despite the fact that local authorities are having to cut their overall budgets the allocation of the Adoption Reform Grant (100 million in England for 2013/14) is the largest source of central government funding to children’s services available, alongside the TFP (Butler 2014).

The majority of those involved in this research expressed ongoing resentment towards social services for the lack of support they provided, made comparisons between social services and FIP, and noted the negative effect these perceptions could have upon their current relationships with family intervention staff. Despite Lucy’s resentment towards social services it was still the first place that the couple turned to for support when they were initially threatened with eviction. This request for support to prevent eviction whilst previously ‘coping’ without social services involvement represents the paradoxical relationships some of the participants had with statutory services:

…Then we had a social worker for a short time and she got hold of some bedding for the baby but she realised that we were fine and she closed the case and we said ‘yeah we are coping fine on our own and the kids are fine’. Then when we first
found out that we were going to get evicted we went to social services and said can you help us. But in a way they have just shrugged us off and haven’t helped us at all, not one little bit…We never had the police round about us only when we were complaining, we had this woman police officer and she left us her card. She worked alongside the community care warden and they both said that we should keep ourselves to ourselves and that was what we were trying to do but they didn’t listen to our side. It’s been hell. (Interview 9, Carl)

For Lucy and Carl, this paradoxical relationship with statutory services was set to continue because even though they successfully completed their intervention with the FIP six months later, their only available accommodation option was supported housing provided by the council. Moreover, the passage also exemplifies further a common theme within the participants’ narratives, the lack of a voice or feeling silenced, as a result of being deemed the anti-social ‘other’. It will become readily apparent later in this and the subsequent chapters, that the silence of being the ‘other’ for those considered as the perpetrators of ASB is evident throughout the eviction process and their ongoing multi-agency interactions. As with Lucy and Carl, this lack of voice was particularly evident when the participants made counter-claims of being the victims of ASB (see also Nixon and Hunter, 2009: Bond-Taylor, 2014). Several of the participants complained that when they reported incidents of ASB against their household to the police and other agencies, ‘keeping themselves to themselves’ was the primary advice they received.

The longevity of their family’s periodic involvement with social services, frustration with the silence of being considered the anti-social ‘other’, and concerns over the detrimental consequences for their children’s well-being were also continually expressed by the second couple evicted. Grant and Sandra who were both in their early forties were recently estranged at the time of their interviews because of the pressures of the eviction. This meant that Sandra and her three sons (12, 11, and 10 years old) were living in one room within a hostel, whilst Grant was residing with relatives and visiting his children on a daily basis. The couple’s ten year old son had motor neurone difficulties and the eleven year old was receiving medical treatment for kidney problems. Grant and Sandra had been working with the FIP for three months at the time of their interviews because of the pressures of the eviction. This meant that Sandra and her three sons (12, 11, and 10 years old) were living in one room within a hostel, whilst Grant was residing with relatives and visiting his children on a daily basis. The couple’s ten year old son had motor neurone difficulties and the eleven year old was receiving medical treatment for kidney problems. Grant and Sandra had been working with the FIP for three months at the time of their interviews. The couple and their children were living initially with Grant’s family after the eviction, and Sandra and the children had been staying at the hostel for less than a week, when the couple were separately interviewed. Within both Grant and Sandra’s interviews,
Grant’s criminal past was directly attributed as the primary reason for their household’s eviction and they repeatedly claimed there was a multi-agency conspiracy against their household.

In regards to the issue of Grant’s ‘past’, the property from which the couple and their children were evicted was located in a small town approximately 45 miles from South City. Grant had spent his young adult life in this town and he had gained notoriety for being a member of a traveller gang. Grant, to his own admission, had spent most of his young adult life in and out of prison and in the late 1980s served a ten year sentence for abducting and stabbing two police officers. The eviction from a housing association property resulted from rent arrears and a multitude of complaints and video surveillance provided by an elderly neighbour, whose son had been previously killed by the same traveller gang that Grant was formerly a member of. These complaints followed on from an initial incident of ASB committed by Grant and Sandra’s eldest son, who was not a member of their household and only an infrequent visitor to their property. The couple and their three youngest sons had previously moved back to the town from Scotland because of concerns over gangs and the knife culture on their estate. This move was arranged through social workers in Scotland and because of delays in transferring their housing benefit the couple had accrued rent arrears at the property from which they were subsequently evicted. Both Sandra and Grant consistently expressed frustration with the levels of support they were receiving and insisted they were silenced and misrepresented within their past and present multi-agency interactions:

We have had social workers for years now and the one I have now doesn’t do her job she comes to see the boys on a Friday once a fortnight and talks to them for five minutes and then she is away again, she does absolutely nothing. Whenever we go to the meetings it’s all about Grant’s past and that has nothing to do with the children and when we get the minutes from the meeting there is nothing that we say on there. A few weeks ago Michael [son] kicked off and hit a boy over the head with a plastic milk carton at school and we get the minutes from the meeting and it said that Michael smashed a bottle over someone’s head. Now if somebody looks at that in black and white they are going to think that it was a glass bottle… They tell Grant that he is not allowed to speak at meetings or he will have to get out… (Sandra, Interview 12).
Sandra’s resentment towards the dearth of support from her current social worker was situated through comparisons with the assistance the couple had previously received whilst in Scotland. The issue of being misrepresented and silenced at meetings and the generally acrimonious nature of their multi-agency interactions were stated throughout this couple’s interviews and similarly expressed by other participants. It has been suggested, that despite limited research into vulnerable families there is ‘a feeling of powerlessness in the face of professional interventions’ (Bond-Taylor 2014: 2).

Later in the interview Sandra mentioned a disturbing visit from two social workers; one of the social workers picked up a toy cap gun and showed the children how you could tell the gun was not real. Later that evening, Sandra’s room in the hostel was raided by a Police Armed Response Unit because the second social worker informed the police there was gun at the property. Although the couple’s claims of a police-led, multi-agency conspiracy against their household are virtually impossible to substantiate, their FIP key worker (Debbie) did confirm and was perturbed by the police raid incident. However, it has also been noted in other qualitative research that the police often dominate and guide the discussions during case conference meetings and use them to collate further evidence, and that their relationships with other agencies are ‘dictatorial and hierarchal, rather than genuinely collaborative’ (McCarthy, 2014: 3). Nonetheless, within four months of their interviews the couple had won their rent arrears tribunal, got back together, moved into the private rented sector and were deemed by the FIP as no longer requiring any further intervention. The issue of families moving into the private rented sector to escape the eviction process and whether their ASB is just being displaced requires further academic scrutiny and will be discussed further in the following chapter.

Perhaps as the corollary of Grant’s ‘past’ and the longevity of their multi-agency interactions, this couple were far more cognisant of the systemic workings of both statutory and non-statutory service providers than any of the other participants. In Grant’s own words, they ‘knew the script’ in regards to their multi-agency involvements, whereas, for the other couple evicted (Lucy and Carl), this lack of knowledge had compounded their situation. The couple also undertook the rather desperate but ultimately unsuccessful measure of attempting to place their children upon the Child Protection Register in order to prevent their children’s suffering and homelessness after the eviction. This was refused by social workers and both Grant and Sandra insisted that they
would have not contemplated such an extreme measure if it was not for their dire situation. The couple’s concerns over the welfare and safety of the children and the desperate measure they were willing to employ also reiterates another common theme within the participants’ narratives, of actively seeking support to alleviate their circumstances. This active engagement in seeking support was particularly evident in relation to lone-female parents unable to curtail the ASB of their male children and their associates.

The final of the three households evicted was headed by Kerry, a 34 year old lone-female parent, whose two teenage boys (15 and 17 years old) were committing ASB by having large groups of youths at their property and holding all night parties. There were also allegations that her children were dealing in illicit drugs at these gatherings but this was vehemently denied by Kerry. Although Kerry herself wanted to be evicted because of overcrowding and because her sons were involved with various acts of criminality on their estate, her household had the dual indignity of being the first in South City to be evicted for ASB and then evicted for a second time from a temporary accommodation hostel. The first of these evictions from a council property attracted local media attention and Kerry herself appeared on the front page of South City’s newspaper. Due to Kerry’s several references to the negative consequences of this local media coverage in her initial interview, I decided to re-interview Kerry six months later. By the time of her second interview, Kerry’s 14 year old daughter was also living with her in a two bedroom property that was provided by the council but managed by the charity through a Family Intervention Tenancy (FIT). This essentially meant that Kerry was on a probationary period for two years and had to prove herself worthy of getting a full council tenancy, and could be instantly evicted for further incidents of ASB. Similar to the other households evicted, Kerry and her children had a long history of intermittent involvement with social services and the care system. From the outset of her initial interview Kerry blamed herself for not being a ‘good’ tenant but insisted that she had contacted social services, the council and the police for assistance in curtailing her children’s and their associates’ ASB:

We had a social worker coz when my boys started to live with me and when we had parties and kicking off and stuff, I was on the phone to them saying I couldn’t cope and that they were out of control. I had no control but there was no help. It’s like I said to my social worker if we were in bed sleeping our door would just go
through, get kicked open at two or three in the morning by teenagers. If my son wanted a quiet night in his mates would just kick the door in. Some of them weren’t even his mates, just blokes using the place to meet up. I reported it to the council and they said thanks for letting them know and that they would support me but they didn’t. On some occasions I called the police and they said they were unhappy because I had so many calls to them in a few weeks…But I don’t think the police took us seriously because of our reputation… (Interview 4, Kerry).

It is extremely difficult to fathom how Kerry would have been able to prevent local youths from kicking her front door in without the assistance of the police. Throughout Kerry’s interviews she highlighted a series of unfortunate events that were ultimately beyond her control against a backdrop of years of suffering from depression. Although the above extract represents Kerry’s traumatic personal experiences and reflections in regards to a dearth of statutory support and housing options, the mitigating factors she employed were commonly expressed by other participants. Two-thirds of the female participants reported suffering from long-term depression and this was cited as a primary factor for failing to curb the ASB committed by their children. Within governmental literature that has allegedly ‘listened’ to ‘troubled’ families it has been stated that, ‘it is somewhat uninformative to say many of these families suffer mental health problems, even if you more specifically say many suffer depression or anxiety as a result of their problems’ (Casey, 2012: I62). It is extremely difficult to comprehend how being evicted or threatened with eviction and/or losing children to the care system would not substantially attenuate such mental health issues. The mental pressure engendered through feelings of fear and anxiety resulting from receiving an eviction notice are vividly expressed in the following extract:

It’s caused so much grief, a lot of grief. I’m worrying all the time and now have gone on anti-depressants because life here is just, well it’s not life, you are not allowed to do anything. I felt suicidal because I’m scared to do anything, I’m scared to do practically anything (Interview 16, Julie).

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39 I use the term ‘allegedly listened’ due to the DWP’s recent use of false quotations and fictitious testimonies in regards to the ‘positive outcomes’ that followed from benefit sanctions (see Rawlinson and Perraudin, 2015).
Julie was a 36 year old lone parent on benefits and had just commenced her intervention with the FIP after receiving a NOSP from the council because of noise-related ASB complaints against her male children (aged 16, 10 and 5 years old). Julie had recently moved to South City because she needed a larger property and repeatedly stated how she regretted giving up a two-bedroom house for a three-bedroomed flat. This regret was situated in regards to the difficulties she was now experiencing (keeping her children’s noise levels down) and she had even replaced all her laminated flooring with carpets as a form of noise prevention.

As Bond-Taylor (2014: 7) notes, the TFP ‘acknowledges the prevalence of depression and mental health problems among the families being targeted, but the process of building the psychological capacity of individuals as a means of generating action and outcomes is not considered sufficiently important’. Whilst government literature reports the prevalence of depression, sexual violence and abuse, they are employed through negative connotations such as ‘being overwhelmed by circumstances and giving up’ and that families did not talk about or seek help through counselling for traumas like violence and rape (Casey, 2012: 62). However, in my research the lone-parent females suffering from depression were desperate for family counselling and more support from mental health and domestic violence agencies (see Chapter 7). Socially excluded, lone parent females are also particularly susceptible to depressive episodes (without seeking medical treatment) and this has been attributed to poverty and ‘severe life events’ (Targosz et al., 2003: 720-721). It has also been suggested that rates of maternal depression are higher for those who have children with ADHD and this can make them less positive in their parent-child interactions (Lee et al., 2013).

For the parent/s being held accountable for the ASB of other family members, over half of them had children with suspected or diagnosed mental health issues. It has been suggested that ‘anti-social behaviour can be a symptom of mental illness’ (Manders 2009: 147; see also BIBIC, 2007) and that lone-parent females from social housing receive a scarcity of suitable support in regards to the mental health disabilities of their children (Bromley et al., 2004; Purdham et al., 2007; Heeney, 2015). Furthermore, some suggest that conditions such as ADHD are being fabricated by working-class parent/s for increased benefit entitlements (Webb 2013), and then spuriously link the disorder to inept and ‘non-respectable’ maternal parenting practices such as alcohol and drug abuse during pregnancy and as such represent exemplars of ‘scroungerphobia’.
and gender stereotyping (Heeney, 2015: 652)\textsuperscript{40}. In regards to ‘scroungerphobia’, as Shildrick and MacDonald (2013) suggest, those with disabilities who were previously considered as ‘deserving’ have now joined the ranks of ‘the underserving poor’. Moreover, these political and media generated ‘discourses are not without consequences’ (ibid: 296) and in relation to the former, the government’s targeting of over-claiming and alleged benefit fraud to vindicate cuts in disability benefits, has facilitated the increase in resentment and abuse and led to the proliferation of hate crimes against those with disabilities. As for gender stereotyping, as Heeney (2015) notes, such derogatory discourses about ‘non-respectable’ maternal parenting practices require further scrutiny and more critical attention paid to the complex interplay between the dynamics of gender, class and disability:

Good and bad mothers exist in all social strata, yet a bourgeois concept of maternal perfection is rarely considered discriminatory in terms of gender and disability…My intention here has been to ask that class be reinstated as a key factor in understanding the lives of families affected by disability, and that the experiences of poor and working-class mothers be seen as valid and respectable beyond neoliberal value systems which define what respectability looks like. A classed reframing of the behaviours and attitudes of poor and working-class families may offer greater understandings that replace old and worn-out assumptions about bad parenting and failing children. Analysis of the intersections of poverty, disability and gender allows for a greater understandings of inequality and how oppressions manifest in the lives of poor families, so that these barriers can be recognised and dismantled. (2015: 652 emphasis added)

Indeed, and as noted in the literature review of this thesis, those with mental health problems are disproportionality represented within the social housing sector and are also simultaneously deemed as vulnerable and requiring support and perceived as a risk for other residents by housing practitioners, who are not adequately trained in the complexities of mental illness (Parr, 2010). Overall, the participants’ narratives also contained a litany of references to environmental factors such as inadequate housing, intra-communal conflict, unemployment, ASB and illicit

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{40} According to Bennet, the mothering of a child with ADHD is particularly problematic because ‘western ideologies that suggest a “bad child” equals a “bad” mother are very difficult to challenge. This is because they are able to masquerade as “common sense”’ (2007: 97).
\end{footnotesize}
drug dealing on problematic estates. For Bourdieu et al., these socio-structural factors are exemplars of class-based misfortune because public housing estates have become ‘sites of social relegation’, where the personal suffering of each is augmented by all the suffering that comes from coexisting and living with so many suffering people together’ (1999: 64 original emphasis; see also McKenzie, 2013, 2015; Tyler, 2013a, 2013b).

Returning to the passage from Kerry (see above), she also reveals the longevity of her onerous efforts to control not only the behaviour of her own children but also the behaviour of those from ‘outside’ her immediate household, a failure that ultimately led to her household’s future evictions. This extends the concept of the ‘critical disciplinary role of gender’ to not only the immediate members of the household but also includes controlling the behaviour of others. Kerry’s sons were socialized within a problematic environment from an early age and her household eventually became both the perpetrators and victims of ASB. Moreover, her appeals for support from the police were in her opinion ignored because of her family’s ‘anti-social’ reputation. The issue of not ‘grassing’ or reporting upon those responsible for committing ASB was also reiterated by Kerry and several of the other participants, especially when it involved other members of their immediate household or incidents of parental abuse (see Chapters 6 and 7). Later in her interviews, Kerry also made numerous references to another mother being a ‘drug dealer’ and having ‘no control over her kids’ and these distinctions represented a common defensive theme within the participants’ narratives and were used to illustrate the unfairness of their current situations. For example, it will become apparent that when the female participants were discussing the actual events that precipitated the eviction process, comparisons with, and the naming of, a ‘more’ anti-social ‘other’, were morally framed within the context of maternal non-respectability (see Skeggs, 1997; 2004; McCarthy, 2014).

These ‘practices of disidentification’ (Skeggs, 1997) have been noted in similar research into the recipients of Parenting Orders (POs), impoverished communities, and young mothers on welfare. In relation to POs, the good/bad parent dichotomy was regularly employed by the participants and as such further reiterated the ‘parent-blame culture’ proliferating through media, legal and political discourses. Moreover, although the issue of ‘respectability’ was not explicitly invoked within the participants’ narratives, constant distinctions and disidentifying with ‘bad parents’ devoid of parenting responsibility and respectability were evident, albeit implicitly (Holt, 2008,
In regards to impoverished communities, however, these disidentification practices were particularly evident and used by those suffering from relative poverty to completely distance themselves from those considered as the ‘undeserving poor’ who were ‘defined by their inability to manage and maintain family respectability’. Moreover, within these working-class communities it was again mothers who were responsible for ensuring ‘respectability’ (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013: 292-293; McKenzie, 2015). The enduring issue of maternal respectability has also been noted in research into young mothers on welfare as ‘many narratives…relied on producing distinctions between the self – who is a “good” mother – and the “other” kinds of “bad” welfare mothers’ (Measor, 2013: 139). In my research the issue of non-respectability was frequently forwarded by female participants not only to distance themselves from ‘bad’ mothers (and their children), but to exemplify who the ‘real’ perpetrators of ASB were, and the unfairness of the allegations against their household.

As noted in the literature review of this thesis, the “rough” and “respectable” dichotomy has a long and enduring history within working-class neighbourhoods. Even in the contemporary era, within these impoverished communities, social distinctions of outsiders are made by established residents and those considered problematic tenants are ‘condemned both for their sheer presence as well as for their behaviour’ (Watt, 2006: 778 emphasis added). According to Watt, this class-based obsession with respectability is engendered through close proximity to poverty and has become a ‘permanent under-lying urban anxiety’ (2006: 786-788):

‘Respectability’ proved to be an important lens through which many tenants assessed themselves, their neighbours and their neighbourhoods. They made strenuous efforts to distanciate themselves from the ‘rough’ elements around them and in doing so maintain their own respectability in straitened circumstances’ (emphasis added).

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41Drawing upon Goffman’s seminal study of stigma (1963), Holt utilises the concept of ‘spoiled identity’ to encapsulate ‘the fact that every parent spontaneously referred to and challenged the suggestion that they were a ‘bad parent’’ (2010: 416 original emphasis).
Due to close proximity, fears of crime and ‘downward mobility into the ranks of the poor’ the white working-class inhabitants of these council estates use characterizations of ‘respectability’ to distance themselves from ‘any marginalized ethnicity including poor whites’ (Webster, 2008: 303-304 original emphasis). Following Haylett (2001) and Skeggs (2004), McKenzie (2013: 1354) argues that in wider social and media discourses a ‘racialization’ process has occurred, in which the poorer sections of the white working-class are considered as ‘dirty white’. For Collett (2013: 167), these intersections between class and white ethnicity are particularly evident in contemporary representations of the ‘chav’, where the young working-class is now understood in terms of ethnicity rather than social class and ‘subsequently caricatured as feckless, feral, bigoted, [and] racist and undeserving’ 42 (see also Nayak, 2006; Webster, 2008; Tyler, 2008).

As noted in the literature review, contemporary interventions such as FIPs that focus upon parenting practices perpetuate this cleavage between the ‘underserving’ and respectable poor through the notion of the good/bad mother, who is held responsible for the behaviour of males. Cultural and political representations of ‘problem parents’ are infused with norms about class and gender, with impoverished white working-class mothers being perceived as the primary progenitors of youth crime and disorder (Holt, 2008, 2009). It has been suggested these cultural representations within the media and political interventions depict white working-class youth as either ‘victims’ (failing educationally) or criminally inclined ‘degenerates’, whilst white working-class mothers are portrayed as lazy, sexually promiscuous and welfare dependant members of the underclass. Moreover, on a wider societal level these derogatory discourses perpetuate and celebrate white, middle-class normality and are also imbued with anti-immigration and patriarchal presumptions (Gillborn, 2010). In regards to ‘troubled’ families, scant academic attention has been paid to the interplay between the dynamics of class, gender and white ethnicity which is particularly disconcerting when FIPs are seemingly targeting impoverished white women and their offspring (Garett, 2007a). This thesis will further consider

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42 The association of racism as a predominantly white working-class characteristic is also pernicious as it omits a consideration of institutional state racism and obscures middle-class prejudices (Haylett, 2001; Lawler, 2005; Gillborn, 2010).
these significant social dynamics and continue to address this academic impasse in the following chapters.

It was noted earlier that fears over homelessness and losing their children to the care system dominated the accounts of the majority of the participants. However, for Liz, a 40 year old single parent of two teenage boys (13 and 15 years old), the care system was perceived by her as the only option available in alleviating her eldest son’s ASB within and outside of their home. The children’s father had left the familial home four years earlier because of incidents of domestic violence against Liz and the children. Liz had a long history of statutory interventions and previously had both her sons in care. Moreover, at the time of her interview Liz was coming to the end of a one year intervention with the FIP, but her eldest son was still on an ABC, tagged and working with a youth charity. The ASB of her eldest son was committed in the passageways outside her flat and in the adjacent blocks and involved urinating, throwing rubbish, smoking cannabis and vocally abusing other residents with members of his gang. Within the familial home he was verbally abusing and physically assaulting his younger brother and his mother:

\[ \text{We had the police round for his ABC but that is more to do with when he is out with his mates it doesn’t help me when he is home. I went to social services about him and they just don’t want to know. I want to put him in care because me and him don’t get on at all because I don’t like his attitude, he calls me a slut and everything and he has been violent in the past but he is more violent to my little one. He calls him a fat bastard and just wants to fight him all the time but where he is streetwise and does boxing he is so much stronger than my little one. My little one keeps saying let me fight him, but I can’t because I know my eldest one will hurt him. I mean it was only this year that I asked for him to be put into care and they weren’t interested, it’s not right (Interview 5, Liz).} \]

The extract graphically illustrates the intra-familial conflict within Liz’s household with her eldest son committing both parental and sibling abuse. The ABC may have a certain utility for alleviating her son’s ASB within the vicinity of their household, but Liz bemoans the absence of support for his behaviour indoors. These salient issues of controlling the ASB of others, and how the participants mediated various forms of conflict and abuse within and outside of their household, will be returned to and considered in more depth in the subsequent findings chapters.
5.3 The Discontinuity of Statutory Services Provision

‘He starts to know them and then they leave’

For some of the participants who received ongoing support from statutory services, the discontinuity with the professionals involved had negatively impacted upon their household. The negative impact of the discontinuities with the professionals involved was of particular concern to the households who had children with suspected or previously diagnosed mental health issues. Paula, a 28 year old lone-parent was threatened with eviction from her council flat because of noise complaints against her ten year old son John, who was recently diagnosed with ADHD. Paula had been working with the FIP for just over a year and the intervention was ongoing because the council had demoted her tenancy and wanted her to move to a hostel, but the FIP wanted her moved into supported housing. Due to the threat of eviction, Paula had decided that her friends would no longer be permitted to drink alcohol at her property and this prompted a hostile reaction from her former associates. At the time of her interview, Paula was keeping a diary provided by the council to log incidents of ASB against her household. This ASB involved stones being thrown at her property and Paula being verbally abused and physically assaulted. As with the participants introduced thus far, Paula had a long history of social services involvement:

I’ve had social workers since he was born and they are crap, they are crap, seriously in the last two and a half years I’ve had seven social workers. I mean my last social worker was actually quite nice I had her for a couple of weeks and then she rang me up and said she was leaving. So I go through all the forms and stuff with one agency and then I do it all over again with another one which takes ages and that is so draining. Then they go and it does my head in. John gets to know them and this is another thing that is mucking his head up, he starts to know them and then they leave he don’t like it. He opens up to them and then goes back into a corner (Interview 3, Paula).

For Paula, this discontinuity with social workers was negatively impacting not only her, but also her son’s attempts to build relationships with the professionals involved. The frustration with the amounts of paperwork that she alludes to was similarly expressed by numerous participants and
represents an initial exemplar of multi-agency fatigue. It will become apparent in the subsequent chapters that there are two central tenets to this multi-agency fatigue, the first, in regards to the laborious process of bureaucracy through paperwork, and the second, involves the emotional strain of repeating their personal narratives to the numerous professionals involved.

For some of the participants who had children with suspected or diagnosed mental health problems it was frustration with education welfare and mental health agencies that caused their multi-agency fatigue. Laura and her partner Mark, were both in their late twenties and had commenced working with the FIP five weeks before their interviews. Mark had been previously threatened with eviction from his mother’s property for ASB prior to meeting Laura. Laura had a 12 year old daughter and a 10 year old son from a previous relationship and the couple had recently had a baby daughter together. This previous relationship had ended five years earlier because of incidents of domestic violence against Laura and the two eldest children still had regular contact with their biological father. The couple had been referred to the FIP by social services for two reasons: firstly, Laura’s son (Simon) had put their household at ‘future’ risk of eviction from their council property by verbally abusing other residents. I use the term ‘future’ risk because at the time of their interviews no written notice threatening eviction had been received from the council. Laura and Mark and their eldest daughter were also being regularly verbally and physically abused within the familial home by Simon.

The narratives of Mark and Laura were extremely similar; however, Mark maintained that Simon’s behaviour deteriorated after visiting his biological father, whereas Laura insisted that Simon’s problematic behaviour intensified when he only had sporadic contact with him. The second reason for their referral to the FIP by social workers was because Laura had a caesarean when she recently gave birth, and when nurses came to change her dressings they reported the couple to social services for their unsanitary living conditions. During her interview, Laura regularly commented upon the latter issue, and expressed how humiliating it was for her partner to have their housekeeping practices scrutinised and found wanting. Prior to their referral to the FIP the couple were already engaged with a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENGO), Multi-Agency Behavioural Support (MABS), and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), but although the couple suspected Simon had ADHD or Asperger’s syndrome; no definitive diagnosis had been received. Both Laura and her partner expressed
frustration at this lack of diagnosis and felt that they were silenced and excluded from the assessment process. The longevity of this process of getting children diagnosed for ADHD (some had been waiting over a year for an assessment) and parent/s feeling the professionals involved were not listening was reiterated by several of the participants and is also readily apparent within governmental literature (see Casey, 2012). According to the House of Commons Health Committee (HoCHC, 2014), increased demand and reductions in funding have created ‘serious and deeply ingrained problems with the commissioning and provision of children’s and adolescents’ mental health services’ (ibid: 3). Moreover, ‘young people and their parents have described “battles” to get access to CAMHS services, with only the most severely affected young people getting appointments’ (ibid: 4). The salient issue of mental health provision will be returned to in Chapter 7. The following extract is Laura’s response to the question of prior multi-agency involvements before referral to the FIP:

We used to have child meetings every six weeks and they were done by the school through SENCO at his old school. But for months I have been saying we need more help with him it has been a long and exhausting battle to get some sought of support at home... Obviously when you have a child with mental health problems you don’t want to make things worse and you don’t want to make them feel less confident and less able to cope, so you don’t really want to do like his dad says and come down hard on him and smack him. If you have a violent, aggressive child, you don’t want to make him more violent and aggressive and if you’re going to act that way then he is going to pick up on it (Interview 13, Laura).

Laura’s experiences of multi-agency frustration and fatigue result primarily from the discontinuities of the professionals involved and the lack of support her and Mark had received. Both Laura and Mark regularly expressed feelings of guilt in relation to keeping Simon indoors to prevent further incidents of ASB, and how they handled confrontational episodes with him more generally, and desperately sought parenting advice from the agencies involved. These expressions of guilt over keeping their children permanently indoors and attempting not to make confrontational incidents worse were similarly expressed by several of the other participants who had children with mental health issues. Throughout Laura’s interview she expressed how she was not prepared to use physical force to curtail Simon’s ASB, and how this had attenuated conflict...
with his biological father for being too ‘soft’ with him. It will become apparent in Chapter 6 that for the female participants who had experienced domestic violence, the issue of not using violence to control their children was of paramount importance.

5.4 The Participants’ Perceptions of the Actual Events that Led to the Eviction Process

‘I think that the council shouldn’t put families above old people because they moan about every single little thing’

As Scott and Parky (1998: 341-342 emphasis added) suggest:

The term ‘anti-social behaviour’ has often been used in a value-laden way which stigmatises those who do not meet ‘accepted standards of behaviour’. In addition, the varying definitions bracket different types of behaviour together as though they were the same thing. It is argued that it is more useful to consider the issue as comprising three distinct, but interrelated phenomena: these being neighbour disputes, neighbourhood problems and crime problems.

This subsection of my opening findings chapter will now present the participants’ perceptions of the actual events that led to their household becoming involved in the eviction process, and will primarily situate these perceptions through the lens of neighbour disputes, however, in some cases these events were further exacerbated through neighbourhood and crime problems. For Scott and Parky (1998), neighbour problems or disputes are characterised through domestic noise, illicit drug usage and dealing, verbal abuse, threats of violence and more general problems with children, and are encapsulated through the term ‘lifestyle clashes.’ Moreover, these lifestyle clashes are primarily engendered through disputes between unemployed, young single tenants and older residents and have been inextricably linked within academic discourses to debates regarding Care in the Community legislation (see Donnison, 1995; Cobb, 1995; Manders, 2010; Parr, 2009a); the residualisation of public housing (Murie, 1997); and theories of social exclusion and the ‘underclass’ (Haworth and Manzi, 1997; Watt, 2006). In regards to neighbourhood and crime problems, Scott and Parky (1998) utilised data from a tenants survey into their dissatisfaction with environmental problems upon their estates, which include the following factors: rubbish and litter; car parking and traffic; stray dogs; vandalism and graffiti;
inadequate street lighting; neglected gardens and open spaces; derelict properties; problem neighbours; disturbances from loitering children and adolescents; theft or crime involving property; and muggings or assaults.

The majority of the fourteen separate households that partook in this research attributed their involvement in the eviction process to some form of neighbour dispute which was the consequence of various lifestyle clashes. The most common form of lifestyle clashes were caused through disputes over noise and close proximity, and the tension between younger and elderly residents. In total, nine of the fourteen households attributed their involvement in the eviction process to these tensions, either through disputes with elderly neighbours and/or being unable to control the abusive behaviour of their adolescent children or their friends. In regards to the former, several of the participants cited close proximity to elderly neighbours and inadequate sound proofing as causal factors:

I think that the council shouldn’t put families above old people because they moan about every single little thing. I’m in a third floor flat with two old people below me they moan about everything even if I like drop a plate on the floor. I have a ten year old son and they even moan about him running across the room, the footsteps of him running across the room, and I’m like what do you expect he is a ten year old. I mean what is he supposed to do, tip toe across the floor (laughs)? But he does have anger problems and was shouting and swearing a lot at me, but I’m trying to sort it out but that’s why the complaints started. I should have moved, seriously before all this started I could have done an exchange with someone but basically I didn’t want to because they call it cell block H and I told my mum about it and she was like ‘don’t you dare’ and I tried to wait for somewhere else (Interview 3, Paula).

The above extract not only represents Paula’s resentment towards the elderly neighbours who complained, but also acknowledges that her son who has been diagnosed with ADHD compounded the situation through his behaviour. Her assertion that she should have moved from the area to avoid further complaints and the lack of suitable alternative accommodation were similarly expressed by several of the other participants. Tellingly, the property she could have exchanged with is compared with a prison wing from a 1980s Australian soap opera, and illustrates the complete lack of suitable housing options available to her. It will become apparent
in the subsequent chapter that lone-female participants expressed their experiences of trying to curtail their households’ ASB, living under ‘supervised freedom’ and the concomitant tutelary surveillance, through the metaphor of feeling incarcerated.

For several other participants their lifestyle clashes with elderly neighbours were conjoined with conflict with more established residents and felt they were victims of their neighbours ‘ganging’ together to get them evicted. Sally, a 40 year old lone-parent, with a 10 year old son, moved into private rented accommodation to avoid eviction proceedings and to stop her son from being bullied by some of the neighbours. At the time of her interview, Sally was coming to the end of a successful one year intervention with the FIP. Interestingly, Sally was not only threatened with eviction because of complaints about noise from her son, but also because of complaints about her dog fouling the communal gardens and because she had previously run a brothel from her council flat. The running of a brothel from this property had broken her tenancy agreement for using the property for ‘immoral purposes’. As with several of the other participants, Sally cited a recent bereavement as a mitigating factor for why she had ‘gone off the rails a bit’. Her son Darren, had previously lived with his biological father and Sally had placed him in the care of his father for what she believed was a few months, whilst she escaped from a violent, drug dealing ex-partner. It took a three year battle with social services to get Darren back into her care; his biological father left Darren with his new partner’s parents because he had to leave the area because of death threats over ‘ripping off’ a local drug dealer. During Darren’s time with his father’s girlfriend’s parents, he was both physically and mentally abused and starved of food on numerous occasions. The following extended extract is Sally’s perceptions of the events that led to her being threatened with eviction:

They were really nasty (neighbours) about everything he (Darren) used to do in his own home, they would say he was too noisy and this, that and the other. One day a bloke (neighbour) came down from upstairs with a snooker cue and threatened him, he was a nasty piece of work… and to try and settle my son in I got him a little puppy…I went out one morning and I came back a bit late and the dog had shit outside in the garden and when I came in the council woman was strutting up and down the front of my flat moaning because the dog had shit in the back garden. I said ‘look love I’ve only just got in I will go and clean it up’, I’m a very tidy person. And then it was constant after that I had the council coming round every five minutes going mad about this, that and the other, they moaned
about the noise my son was making… an elderly neighbour upstairs said he could hear me having sex (laughs), well they are going to it’s a one bedroom flat and the walls are paper thin, it was like a rabbit hutch (laughs)...We used to get blamed for everything, in the end it got so much with my dad dying as well that I couldn’t cope with it anymore. The people knocking the door all the time were old mates but I said I can’t have them round because I get complaints all the time; I got an eviction notice to get out. It was like I wasn’t allowed any friends when I needed them most…Darren has dyslexia and a cleft lip with a hole in his pallet and the kids were starting to take the mickey out of him and the bloke thought it was good idea to have a go at Darren as well, so that is how we started arguing…Then, upstairs would have a go and the council gave them diaries, I reckon about five people kept diaries because in the end it came to the point where all down the street people were saying don’t let you kids play with Darren coz were trying to get them out, and in the end it got to the stage where Darren had no one to play with in the street… (Interview 6, Sally).

As with some of the other participants, initial complaints against Sally and her son escalated into violent confrontations and she also notes the significance of bereavement as a reason for not coping properly. Sally’s assertion that she is a ‘very tidy person’ was also reiterated in the narratives of several female participants in relation to their housekeeping practices. This point in regards to housekeeping has particular salience, because after being labelled as an ‘anti-social’ household it appeared that for some of the female participants any allegation of an untidy home signified the non-respectability of their household more than allegations of ASB. As Skeggs (1997: 90) asserts, ‘home and bodies are where respectability are displayed’ (see also Lawler, 2005; Watt, 2006; Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013; McKenzie, 2015)43.

Sally also had no regret over running a brothel and the disturbance this caused, as this was the only way she could get the money to provide for her son when he was returned to her care. As with the previous extract from Paula above, Sally also blames inadequate sound proofing and the size of her flat for her predicament. In common with Sally, some the other participants also complained they were being blamed for the ASB of others and the deleterious affect the eviction

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43 There is a long and enduring history (see the discussion of ‘chavs’ in the literature review of this thesis) of cultural representations, in which, the distinction between the ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ are articulated through perceptions of excessive sexual behaviour and the corporeal inadequacies of working-class females (Skeggs, 1997; 2004; Tyler, 2008; Gillborn, 2010; McKenzie, 2013; 2015).
process had upon their social networks and relationships. For Sally, as with other participants, she could only estimate how many other households were keeping diaries and resented those she believed were responsible for this form of surveillance. As Power lucidly contends from her research into lone female welfare recipients in Canada:

> Participants’ lives were governed by arbitrarily applies rules, and by the possibility that they could be reported by anyone (and no one in particular, since the name of the initiator of any such report remained confidential) for a real, suspected, imagined or fabricated transgression of those rules. Such arbitrariness would give rise to considerable anxiety…and leave a lingering paranoia about whom one could trust… (2006: 651).

Several of the participants expressed feelings of angst and paranoia in relation to whether or not neighbours had been provided with diaries by the council or housing association to log further incidents of ASB. The issue of surveillance will be returned to in Chapters 6 and 7. Returning to Sally, the horrendous bullying that Darren was subjected to denied him friends, not only within close proximity, but also from children further down the street. The significant issue of losing social networks will also be further elaborated upon in the following chapter.

The issue of neighbourhood bullying was of particular importance for the only participant who vehemently denied all of the allegations of ASB against her household. Sam, was a 34 year old lone-parent with four children (11, 10, 6, 4 years old), two boys and two girls. Sam had recently started working with the FIP at the time of her interview. Originally, it was believed that Sam’s children were the perpetrators of ASB, but at a recent multi-agency meeting it was noted that Sam and her family were in fact the real victims of ASB from their neighbours, who again had previously been close friends. The following passage is Sam’s perceptions of the events that led to her household becoming involved in the eviction process, and is quoted at length to encapsulate the abuse her family were experiencing and her feelings of absolute despair:

> I’m stuck in the middle between two neighbours who are very good friends with each other. They basically abuse me and my family on a daily basis, if it’s not one it’s the other and vice versa. As soon as we go out of the door in the mornings, my
children are very frightened to go out and they have turned all the other children in the block against me and my children. They throw stones at my children even when we are just going out of the home and stuff like that. Lots of things have happened, lots, I have been threatened to be killed by one of my neighbour’s partner’s three times. I have been beaten up by the other neighbour next door to me. It’s just ongoing with constant abuse and has been ongoing for over a year now...They gang up on me and say things and have parties and say really nasty things about me in the garden, I could hear it through the wall and the air vents. They would say that I’m a slag and a bitch and that I have kids with different dads and stuff like that...But just recently they have started to believe us now because the wardens have started to witness what they have been doing to us... (Interview 20, Sam).

From the outset of the extract Sam outlines the painful effects of the intra-communal conflict upon her children and how initial disputes with neighbours have escalated and led to the other children in the block turning against her family. The threats to kill and assaults that followed are at the criminal end of the ASB spectrum, and as Scott and Parky (1998) note, seemingly trivial neighbour disputes can spiral out of control and end in violence. Sam acknowledged throughout her interview how difficult it had become proving her household’s innocence and that those who complain first, claim loudest, and this was a theme replicated in several of the other participants’ narratives. The silence of being labelled the ‘anti-social other’, is again personified by the fact her complaints were only really taken seriously when neighbourhood wardens witnessed the verbal abuse Sam’s friends were being subjected to. This is despite the fact that Sam repeatedly logged the incidents and complained to the police, and was taping abusive incidents on her mobile phone. Moreover, the levels of abuse were not only confined to the area in which she lived, as the neighbours were abusing her at her children’s school. The close proximity to her neighbours meant that Sam not only had the disturbance of noisy parties to contend with but also could hear them talking maliciously about her. These malicious conversations again largely involved the issue of perceived ‘non-respectability’ and were framed within the context of her sexual practices and having children with different fathers. The issue of non-respectability has particular criminological salience, as the concept has also been linked to the credibility of rape
and sexual violence allegations (see Phipps, 2009). It has also been suggested that legal and cultural representations of the ‘lower’ classes are inherent within the judgements of the professionals who initially identify ‘troubled’ families (McCarthy, 2011; 2014) and their children (McAra and McVie, 2005). As McCarthy succinctly suggests:

> …the classifications employed by professionals towards the constitution of signs of anti-social or risky behaviour are often themselves embodiments of class, based upon notions of ‘deficit’ and ‘lack’ which draws upon a set of cultural representations of lower class culture as a group in need of control and order (2011: 6 emphasis added).

Indeed, this historically enduring dichotomy between the disreputable and respectable poor is deeply embedded within governmental policies and discourses aimed at managing the working classes (McAra and McVie, 2005; Somerville, 2009; Carr, 2010; Gillborn, 2010) and as previously noted, ‘the marginalization of white ethnicity is always mediated by notions of respectability’ (Webster, 2008: 304).

In the contemporary era, neoliberal views of minimalistic welfare provision are considered both morally and economically necessary and the rhetoric of personal responsibility and ‘respectability’ negates a consideration of structural factors such as class, gender, ethnicity and disability, through considering inequality as the corollary of personal and moral deficiencies (Gillborn, 2010). In my research however, the issue of respectability, or more precisely non-respectability, is also contested by the anti-social ‘other’, with comparisons with those perceived as even less ‘respectable’, and as we have seen, often sighted as a causal factor within neighbourhood conflict and disputes.

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44 According to Phipps, ‘rape trials generally turn on the issue of consent, and it seems that this is inversely linked to respectability, since those who fail to meet the respectability criterion are thought to have permanent consent to sexual violation written into their behaviour’ (2009: 674).
5.5 The Participants’ Perceptions of the Actual Events that Led to the Eviction Process (continued)

‘It started off when I was at work and the kids were left alone’.

As previously noted, some of the participants became involved in the eviction process because of the ASB committed by their male children and their associates. This form of ASB largely entailed the participants’ teenage children having local youths round and having parties that involved illicit drugs, causing disturbance and abusing other residents. Although these disturbances also caused neighbour disputes, they were primarily characterised by the participants through references to neighbourhood and crime problems more generally. As McKenzie (2015: 170) noted, following over eight years of ethnographic research on an infamous Nottingham council estate, the inherent instability, fear and desperate frustration she witnessed had detrimental consequences for the inhabitants as ‘people become angry and sometimes aggressive’. For some of the participants in my research, the presence of gangs of youths running amok upon their estates was offered as an explanation for why their household had become involved in the eviction process. For Liz, who was introduced earlier, her son’s ASB both within and outside the home is inextricably entwined with neighbourhood problems, through the gang of youths he associates with:

My oldest son was throwing rubbish, urinating, swearing at the neighbours, smoking cannabis in the passageways outside the flat. It’s only the fifteen year old (son) that has got in trouble and he is tagged at the moment. There have only been a few complaints mostly about my eldest son and his mates telling people to ‘fuck off’ and that, but it wasn’t only complaints from my block it was the surrounding blocks as well. His mates are on ABCs and one has an ASBO and they are in a gang and they think they own the place. None of them work or go to school round here so they just hang around all day and night pissing people off (Interview 5, Liz).

The extract illustrates both the ASB of her son and his associates and the normality of ASB sanctions for some of the youths who inhabit the estate, and Liz situates their ASB as a consequence of their limited horizons. Liz implicitly recognises on a micro-level the deleterious
impact these socio-structural constraints have upon the other residents. On a macro level, these
youths are part of the multitude of young people in contemporary Britain colloquially known as
the ‘lost’ NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) generation (Macdonald and Marsh,
2005). The complex interplay between the dynamics of class and gender are again readily
apparent for this generation and in 2012 a fifth of young people (aged 16-24) were considered as
being within this category (Lea, 2013; Tyler, 2013a; 2013b). According to MacDonald et al.,
(2005), the structural dearth of ‘masculine employment’ opportunities for this ‘lost’ and socially
excluded generation have engendered ‘displaced masculinities’, in which status and respect are
instead sought through criminality, violence and being ‘streetwise’ rather than the unlikely
prospect of finding work (see also Nayak, 2006; McKenzie, 2013; 2015; Squires, 2013). The
‘NEET’ generation will be further elaborated upon in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

In a similar fashion, Jess, a 38 year old lone-parent female, with three male children (12, 13, 16
years old), became involved with the FIP after being threatened with eviction and placed on a
twelve month probationary tenancy by the council. These sanctions were because of the ASB of
her children and local youths, who were drinking and taking drugs at her property. Jess, at the
time of her interview, was in the process of completing an exit plan from the FIP after a nine
month intervention and had successfully stabilised her council tenancy. In Jess’s own words, she
‘had suffered domestic violence all my life’ and she and her children had previously lived in a
domestic violence refuge. One month prior to her interview, Jess was attacked with a glass in a
local nightclub by her ex-partner after recently ending a nine month relationship with him
because of his violent and controlling tendencies. This enduring history of domestic violence was
ongoing, not from the ex-partner, but through incidents of verbal abuse from her children (a
significant factor that will be further elaborated upon in the following chapter). The extract that
follows is Jess’s perceptions of the events that led to her becoming involved in the eviction
process:

It started off when I was at work and the kids were left on their own because I was
working from seven to seven at night. They were left to basically get up for
school and get home and sort themselves out and they were having friends round,
throwing things out the flat window… then I had my sixteen year old hanging
round with local kids, who were trouble makers and they started coming up onto
our balcony and getting drunk, I was going through a real bad patch and I had to give up my job because my kids were so unruly, and I was told by the council that I had to pull them into line... So then they started coming down heavier, I had a letter saying that there had been ASB at my flat and that I had to sort it out or I will get evicted... (Interview 19, Jess).

Jess accepts full responsibility for the events that led to her household becoming involved in the eviction process, and blames herself for not properly supervising her children whilst she was working long hours. Her children’s ASB originally caused disturbance to her neighbours and this soon escalated when groups of local youths started congregating at her property, drinking alcohol and smoking cannabis. Similarly to the other participants being held accountable for the ASB of their male children and their associates, Jess was initially unable to curtail the ASB and was verbally abused if she attempted to do so. It is difficult to comprehend how Jess would have prevented local youths from using her property if it was not for the assistance of the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU). The fact these local youths were verbally abusing her and attempting to kick down her front door, whilst she was trying to ‘clamp down’ on her own children’s ASB, both within and outside the familial home, reveals the extent of her predicament. Of all the participants, Jess showed the greatest appreciation for not only the assistance from the council and the ASBU, but also for the support from the FIP. Jess’s interview also illustrated that despite the cessation of the ASB committed by local youths and her children, neighbourhood and crime problems persist around the vicinity of her property. These problems were framed within the context of drug dealing neighbours and her fears that her children will become involved. As with the other participants, Jess felt her complaints were ignored by the police.

5.6 Conclusion

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, the voices of the ‘troubled’ families requiring intervention remain unheard (Morris and Featherstone, 2010; Murray and Barnes, 2010; Morris 2013; Taylor-Bond, 2014) and there is also a distinct lack of qualitative research into the ‘problems’ that prompt social landlords to use the ASB sanctions at their disposal (Hunter et al, 2007a). These represent significant omissions that this chapter has addressed. Moreover, there has also been a dearth of attention paid to the gendered aspects of these sanctions (Carr, 2007; 2010; Parr, 2011; Taylor-Bond, 2014), so this chapter has also enhanced academic literature on
the phenomenon by illustrating not only the salience of gender but also its ‘intersectionality’ (Gillborn, 2010) with the dynamics of class and white ethnicity.

Essentially, the primary purpose of this and the subsequent findings chapters is to give the ‘troubled’ families involved with the FIP a much needed voice by analytically focusing upon their perceptions, relationships, interactions and contexts (Squires, 2008) both prior to and since becoming involved in the eviction process. This chapter commenced by contextualising the participants’ perceptions of their previous statutory involvements prior to the eviction process. These relationships and interactions exemplified their ongoing vulnerability and feelings of instability; the significance and prevalence of mental health issues; multi-agency fatigue and concomitant feelings of frustration and resentment at being silenced within these and their subsequent relations with some of the tutelary agencies involved.

In regards to mental health, although its prevalence is noted in both academic (see Manders, 2010) and policy (see Casey, 2012) literature on ASB and ‘troubled’ families respectively, this chapter illustrated how the participants desperately tried to curb their children’s behaviour and appease the numerous agencies involved, whilst often suffering long-term depression themselves. As previously noted, it is extremely difficult to comprehend how mediating the eviction process and/or the prospect of losing their children to the care system would not significantly attenuate their depression. For those with children with suspected or previously diagnosed mental health issues there was complete dearth of adequate provision and some had been waiting over a year for an assessment. In regards to multi-agency fatigue, despite feelings of resentment and frustration some had paradoxical relationships with the tutelary agencies involved, in which their needs for more assistance were conjoined with the desire to cope without further interventions.

This was followed by an analysis of the participants’ perceptions of the actual events that led to their household becoming involved in the eviction process, and revealed how some of the participants’ households were both the perpetrators and victims of ASB (see also Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Bond-Taylor, 2014). This focus upon the victim half of the ASB equation, illustrated how some of the participants suffered from ongoing parental abuse and again the silence of being labelled the anti-social ‘other’ especially when they made counter claims of ASB (see also Nixon and Hunter, 2009). The deleterious consequences of forms of intra-
communal bullying were framed within the context of ‘non-respectability’. As such, pervasive ‘notions of respectability’ (Webster, 2008: 304) were invoked by the participants to make comparisons with, and to distance themselves from more ‘anti-social’ families, and was also readily apparent in their perceptions of the neighbourhood disputes that led to them becoming involved in the eviction process.

The participants attributed the actual events that led them to becoming involved in the eviction process to neighbour disputes through various lifestyle clashes and neighbourhood and crime problems more generally (Scott and Parky, 1998). In regards to neighbour disputes, these were engendered through close proximity, inadequate housing (overcrowding and sound proofing), and tension and conflict between older and more established and younger residents. Moreover, these seemingly minor disputes, sometimes with former friends, often escalated into more serious episodes. The neighbourhood and crime problems largely involved the female participants being unable to curtail the ASB of not only their male children, but also in some cases large numbers of youths causing disturbances at their properties.

The following findings chapters will continue a detailed consideration of the salience of the complex interplay between the dynamics of gender, class, and white ethnicity. These significant dynamics have, to date, only been mentioned in passing within academic discourses of ‘troubled’ families (see Morris, 2013; Bond-Taylor, 2014; Crossley, 2015), and will be further elaborated upon and extended. The next chapter will also illustrate in-depth, how the participants mediated the familial consequences of the eviction process and will continue to elucidate the pivotal significance of emotional, psychological, and socio-economic factors.
CHAPTER 6

Living the Tutelary Complex: Mediating the Familial Consequences of the Eviction Process.

6.1 Introduction

As noted in the introduction and previous chapters of this thesis, it has been suggested that ASB sanctions represent gendered ‘disciplining interventions’ that are being primarily targeted at white, lone-parent females for not controlling the behaviour of their primarily male children, and because FIPs in particular focus upon ‘a crucial component of these women’s identity – their mothering skills’ (Carr, 2010: 83). This, as the second of my findings chapters, will principally focus upon how the participants mediated the familial consequences of the eviction process and as such will explicate the effects of these predominantly gendered and classed sanctions. This will be illustrated firstly, through the practices and strategies the participants employed to prevent further incidents of ASB, and then secondly, the effects the eviction process (and living under various forms of multi-agency surveillance) had upon their households and their familial relationships, interactions and wider social networks. This focus upon the practices and strategies employed will also elucidate how some of the lone-parent females (from domestic violence backgrounds) actively resisted resorting to the disciplinarian practices of their previous partners to control their children’s behaviour, despite suffering from ongoing parental abuse themselves. This ongoing parental abuse took various forms, ranging from violent and abusive altercations within the home to stealing and even blackmail. Although the prevalence of adolescent to parent violence and abuse (APVA) has been noted in previous research into families engaged with FIPs (see Nixon and Hunter, 2009; Hunter, Nixon and Parr, 2010; Casey, 2012), and parenting programmes (Holt, 2011; Holt and Retford, 2013) respectively, some of my participants cited the issue as directly precipitating their ASB sanctions and compounding their attempts to mediate the eviction process. Moreover, as this chapter unfolds, the consideration of their reluctance to resort to the disciplinarian and domestically violent practices of former partners will elucidate
further and extend the ‘critical disciplinary role of gender’ and represents one of the most significant contributions that my work is making to this field.

Interestingly, although both the male and female participants in my research employed various practices and strategies to curtail further incidents of ASB, it was only the females who framed these within the context of their parenting skills, through maternal ‘respectability’ and responsibility or not being considered as a ‘bad’ mother. This focus upon the strategies and practices employed to avoid further sanctions will reveal that far from being ‘feckless’ most of the participants accepted their parental responsibilities and the necessity to change their previous parenting practices.

6.2 Preventing Further Allegations of ASB but Refusing to Adopt Disciplinarian Practices

‘I can’t make them respect me, what do you want me to do bounce them of the walls like he used to do’?

The participants in my research adopted various practices and strategies to avoid further allegations of ASB against their households: attempting to keep their children quiet; removing them from the locality; keeping them indoors: or apologising to and mediating with their neighbours. Those participants who were primarily involved in the eviction process because of complaints over noise-related ASB, also took various practical steps to avoid further sanctions. These included confiscating remote controls for audio equipment and as noted in the previous chapter, one participant even removed her laminated flooring and laid carpets to avoid complaints about her children’s footsteps from the neighbours who lived below her flat.

For several of the lone-parent females, attempts to curtail their children’s ASB both within and outside the familial home were often exacerbated because they refused to adopt the disciplinarian and often violent measures of their former partners, despite being subjected to various forms of parental abuse themselves. The salience of the critical disciplinary role of gender was particularly evident within these narratives, and several of the lone-parent females felt their children blamed them for not protecting them from their previous domestic violence backgrounds or because they no longer had contact with their fathers. This blaming by the children was largely manifested through a lack of respect towards their mothers’ attempts at setting boundaries to avoid further allegations of ASB. These boundaries would include setting
times for when their children should come in at night or in some cases keeping their children permanently indoors.

It has been suggested that mothers who have experienced domestic violence suffer from depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, whilst their children, who witness or are subjected to the violence experience post-traumatic stress, behavioural and social problems, low self-esteem, low education attainment, decreased empathy and in some cases become the perpetrators of parental abuse. Moreover, it can also have an adverse effect on parenting ability in regards to control and authority, and this can put their children at risk of committing ASB or becoming young offenders and increase the risk of school exclusion, alcohol and substance abuse. Furthermore, although domestic violence is evident amongst all social classes it is particularly prevalent within poorer communities (Holt, Buckley and Whelan 2008; Phipps, 2008; Lourenco et al., 2013; inter alia)\(^4\). The complex issues of domestic violence and APVA will be returned to later in this chapter. The following extracts are some of the participants’ responses to whether or not becoming involved in the eviction process had changed their parenting practices.

At time of her interview, Mandy was 32 years old and four months pregnant with her fifth child and had just recently commenced working with FIP. Mandy and her children (13, 11, 8, 2 years old) had moved to the area to escape from a domestically violent relationship but were evicted from a domestic violence refuge because of their behaviour. This relationship was with the biological father of all of her children and Mandy’s eldest 13 year old son was currently being assessed for ADHD and had recently started verbally abusing her. Mandy and her children were referred to the FIP because they were now being threatened with eviction from a temporary accommodation flat provided by the council, because of complaints over noise-related ASB and damage to the property. Mandy left the intervention with the FIP one month after the interview without an exit plan and moved to a city in the north of England with a new partner and her children. Sadly, I was not surprised that Mandy failed to complete her intervention with the FIP, as throughout her interview she expressed her disillusionment with all the agencies involved, and

\(^4\) It has been suggested that sexual violence is also more evident within impoverished communities and that working-class female victims of DV are more likely to fight back against the aggressors (Phipps, 2008)
repeatedly said that the eviction process felt like a hopeless catch twenty-two situation, torn between the demands of the various agencies and her children’s demands for more freedom.

Those ‘troubled’ families that ‘unsuccessfully’ exit or refuse to comply with any form of intervention require further academic scrutiny. This non-compliance raises the significant issue of whether those ‘troubled’ families who refuse any form of intervention, or leave prior to a successful exit, are simply displacing their ASB by leaving social housing and going into privately rented accommodation (Hoffman, Mackie and Pritchard, 2010). Two of the households in my research moved into the private rented sector following being evicted or threatened with eviction. In the context of my research, 905 ‘troubled’ families within South City were identified as requiring intervention under the Troubled Families Program (TFP), but by August 2014, only 775 families were actually involved with the TFP. This local non-compliance and refusal of intervention is seemingly higher than in the rest of England. For example, in England, of the 12,850 referrals for family intervention (between February 2007 and March 2011) only 3 per cent (386 families) refused any intervention. However, upon closer inspection of these figures, only 70 per cent of the 12,850 referrals successfully exited a family intervention project within the above time frame. Moreover, 18 per cent (648 families) were conversely recorded as having both successful and unsuccessful reasons for leaving the intervention, or no reason was given. A further 9 per cent (316 families) had inconclusive (neither successful nor unsuccessful) reasons for leaving, and 4 per cent (142 families) left for unsuccessful reasons (Dixon et al. 2010). The salient issue of non-compliance with the TFP will be returned to in Chapter 7.

Mandy’s current relationship with a 17 year old male was also under the scrutiny of social services and she was facing allegations of inappropriate sexual behaviour between her partner and eldest daughter. The following extract is Mandy’s response to whether or not the threat of eviction had changed her parenting practices.

I must admit my family have a lot of issues, a lot of problems. Unfortunately, due to the way my ex-partner run our lives… it’s now all kicked off and gone caso (mad) and the kids have gone nuts. They had absolutely no freedom at all so now they’ve got freedom they have gone to the other extreme and think they can do what they want. It’s not as bad as some families…I’m always trying to keep them quiet and that is so hard but when they row everything that has ever happened is dragged up and I think they blame me for the lives we had before. I feel ashamed
that I put up with it for so long really it makes me feel like a bad mum. So now we are away from him and all his discipline they see me more as their best mate rather than their mum...I can’t make them respect me. What do you want me to do bounce them off the walls like he used to? (Interview 1, Mandy).

From the outset of the extract, Mandy locates her familial problems as being attenuated by the fact that her children have a new sense of freedom since escaping from their domestic violence backgrounds and their father’s draconian discipline. Mandy vehemently refuses to adopt her former partner’s disciplinarian practices, and she accepts that because of this her family could be evicted from their temporary accommodation if she fails to curb their behaviour. In a similar vein to those participants who made comparisons to other more ‘anti-social’ families (see previous chapter), Mandy asserts that her situation is not ‘as bad as some families’. Similarly, several of the other participants had children who were on limited school hours and this was often cited as a problematic factor in their attempts to curtail their children’s ASB (this factor will be further elaborated upon in the following chapter). For Mandy, her attempts to keep her children quiet were hindered because she felt her children blamed her for not leaving their violent father earlier and this caused considerable parental anxiety. Mandy’s reference to ‘feeling like a bad mum’ and the shame and guilt she expresses over the longevity of remaining in a domestic violence relationship were also forwarded by other female participants who had escaped similar circumstances and represent a further exemplar of their habitus through feelings of inevitable inadequacy (Barker, 2016).

The issue of multi-agency fatigue was again readily apparent throughout Mandy’s interview and she regularly expressed frustration with the bureaucracy involved and the demands the numerous agencies had imposed on her household. By means of example, she listed the various agencies who attended her case conference meetings: three education welfare officers and a school nurse; two flat checkers; the FIP key worker (Paul) and his manager; two social workers and a housing officer46. The fact that those responsible for checking her flat had keys to her property (and could

46 This number of multi-agency involvement is perhaps unsurprising, for example, research undertaken by Aperia Limited (2010) found that low income families had 9 public sector agencies with at least 25 services being provided (see also Batty and Flint, 2012; Casey, 2012; Hayden & Jenkins, 2015).
let themselves in if no one answered when they called round) made Mandy and her children particularly resentful. For Mandy, even wanting to go away with her family for a weekend meant she would have to go through the laborious process of getting permission from the numerous agencies involved. As Batty and Flint (2012: 349) suggest, ‘troubled’ families ‘are embedded in a web of relationships and interactions (even if these may be disengaged, dormant or hostile) with a range of private, public and community and voluntary sector agencies and services’. Moreover, this range of services can engender substantial difficulties for FIP key workers who are often responsible for co-ordinating service provision (Flint, 2012; Bond-Taylor, 2014).

Mandy regularly commented on the surveillance her family were living under, and insisted that having certain key workers visiting her three times a week and flat checks on a daily basis (except Christmas Day) was making her children have a total lack of respect for the multi-agencies involved. In Mandy’s own words, she had initially thought the flat checks were just on the condition of her accommodation and housekeeping practices, but had come to realise ‘they were actually watching how we behave and how I am as a parent’. It has been suggested that both theoretically and empirically there has been a dearth of critical attention paid to the domestic visits that form part of FIPs (Flint, 2012). Moreover, within the studies that have considered the domestic visit element of FIPs (see Garrett, 2007a; 2007b), there is an over reliance upon Foucault’s (1977) conceptions of ‘the panopticon as a metaphor of governance and disciplinary power’ that omits a consideration of how ‘the surveillance of domesticity can have progressive as well punitive dimensions’ (Flint, 2012: 833). For Flint, the progressive elements of the domestic visit he alludes to can enable FIP workers to comprehend the families levels of vulnerability and this form of surveillance could also enable ‘an understanding of the dynamics and issues within a household and, potentially, more effective support’ (ibid: 834). In my research however, all of the females experiencing this type of domestic intervention perceived these visits as essentially being ‘spying’ missions, and found any form of negative inferences about their housekeeping practices as thoroughly demeaning (see later in this chapter), and again were framed through comparisons with other ‘non-respectable’ mothers.

For Mandy, the lack of respect she and her children had for the multitude of agencies involved was also hindering the efforts of social workers attempting to get her children to ‘open up’ about their domestically violent pasts, and she insisted that ‘the tighter they clamp down on them, the
tighter my kids pack together’. Later in her interview, Mandy recounted a recent incident in which her eldest son made a female social worker leave their flat because she had made her cry. Throughout her interview, Mandy consistently reiterated that she and her family were constantly monitoring what they disclosed to the agencies involved and were all terrified at the prospect of being homeless or the children being placed into care. The following extract is Mandy’s response to how it feels living under the threat of homelessness and the prospect of losing her children to the care system:

It makes me feel like a failure literally. I’ve held my family together, I held my family together through thick and thin…But because of how possessive my ex-partner was with my time and other stuff, housework and stuff didn’t get done, social services came out and said the house keeping was not of a good standard and get it sorted and I did…I got everything done on top of him bouncing me off the walls and getting between him and the kids. I managed that for so long and he always said to me that if you ever leave me you won’t cope, you will lose the kids and everything. I know he only said that to control me but everything he said is coming true, so on top of the stress and pressure I’m under, everything he said has turned out right, so I’m now even more stressed and paranoid. It’s like running on a hamster mill for no reason (Interview 1, Mandy).

The above extract graphically illustrates how Mandy’s previous attempts to appease social workers, in regards to her housekeeping practices, were undertaken whilst she and her children were being subjected to domestic violence. Despite escaping this violent situation, her former partner’s taunts that she would not be able to ‘cope’ without him were becoming a reality since the threat of eviction from her temporary accommodation. Of all those involved in this research, Mandy was the only one who considered her and her children as a ‘problem’ or ‘troubled’ family because of their domestic violence backgrounds and often expressed that she felt like a ‘bad mum’, and light-heartedly suggested they were the ‘asbo chav family’47. Moreover, she readily admitted that she needed to stop her children damaging their temporary accommodation, but insisted her family’s involvement with the eviction process was primarily an overreaction to her

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47 See literature review of this thesis for a discussion of the ‘chav’ phenomenon and how it represents the latest manifestation of derogatory class-based, cultural stereotypes.
children’s behaviour by the council. The above extract also contains Mandy’s reflections upon her past mediatory role and she later discussed the practices she and her children previously employed to counteract their father’s controlling and disciplinarian tendencies. For example, Mandy would attempt to keep the children’s ‘bad’ behaviour a secret from their father and all the children regularly attended school because they feared reprisals from him. In Mandy’s own words, now the children have been ‘put into an environment a safe distance from him (the father), they suddenly think hold on a minute we are away from his rules’.

This mediatory role, according to Mandy, had made her children consider her as a best friend rather than their mother, and she locates her children’s current lack of respect towards her and difficulties she has setting boundaries and getting them to attend school as a consequence of this complex relationship. It has been suggested that mothers who have escaped domestically violent relationships have previously had to ‘make considerable efforts to protect their children’ and now attempt to over compensate to counteract their former partner’s violent and abusive parenting practices (Holt, Buckley and Whelan, 2008: 801). These points are significant, and raises a caveat for multi-agency staff, who by holding mothers responsible for situations beyond their control could be exacerbating private and public patriarchies (Bond-Taylor, 2014).

Moreover, the shift from private to public patriarchy is especially evident for lone mothers (Hunter and Nixon, 2009).

It will also become apparent as this chapter unfolds, that the inversion of the parent-child relationship was often forwarded by the participants as a reason for involvement in the eviction process and largely entailed their male children attempting to control them and other members of the household. For Mandy, mediating between the various agencies involved and her children was becoming particularly problematic:

So I’m fighting against them and my kids at the same time. It makes me feel isolated at times between my family and my key workers…I’m stuck in the middle… I feel frightened and intimidated when the kids ask to do something. The first thing I think is yeah but what are the consequences, what’s that worker going think or what does that look like? Or if they say can we go to the park today, I’m thinking I’ve tidied up, they are being quite good, so normally as a mum and if we were living in our own place I would say ok…Whereas now in the TAS (Temporary Accommodation Service) flat and the situation I’m in, I’m
thinking hold on a minute if they turn up and we are all down the bloody park but they know one of them hasn’t been to school today, or I’ve still got washing in my bedroom what the hell are they going to think, so my head is constantly thinking about who is going to be there and what they are going to think… basically I’m monitoring everything, thinking how is that going to look and if they are talking about me when I’m not there (Interview 1, Mandy).

The stress and uncertainty of not knowing whether they will be rehoused was similarly conveyed by the other participants especially those in temporary accommodation. As with the other participants, the above extract vividly expresses how those involved in the eviction process and the tutelary demands of the various multi-agencies involved, experienced feelings of angst and paranoia in relation to their parenting and housekeeping practices. In regards to housekeeping, Mandy later made another ‘non-respectable’ comparison and stated, ‘I understand that some mums need reminding to sweep up every day but I’m not one of them’. In the latter part of her interview, Mandy also considered the deleterious effects the threat of eviction is having upon her pregnancy and her reflections upon the improvements that have occurred in her children’s behaviour. These entailed her children ‘keeping the noise down’ and general improvements in their behaviour. Mandy was frustrated because despite these improvements the council and other agencies involved were still not satisfied with the time these changes were taking to implement. This dissatisfaction with the temporal constraints imposed upon behavioural improvements was similarly voiced by the majority of the participants. Moreover, it will later become apparent that the pressure that resulted from these demands meant that for several participants the only available option was to keep their children permanently inside the property. It was not only the lone-parent females who refused to adopt the disciplinarian practices of their ex-partners to curtail their children’s ASB. Both Laura and Mark, whose household was deemed at ‘future risk’ of eviction (see Chapter 5) because of Laura’s son Simon’s ASB, similarly refused to resort to physical punishment:

His dad is very strict which in one way is good because he knows exactly where he stands but his ideas of punishment and mine are vastly different. He will smack him and be really tough on him and I don’t do that… I think he thinks it is just the case that I have let him get away with blue murder basically…our past with his dad is quite awful we didn’t have the best of relationships I was a victim of
domestic violence and when I left I explained to my kids’ that I didn’t deserve that anymore and that I never deserved it. I think that Kim (FIP worker) has been talking to him (Simon’s biological father) as well and helping that side of things a bit. He has always been involved to an extent but it has always been difficult because he is such a control freak...I think a lot of Simon’s behaviour is from what he has seen and heard from his dad and definitely think his attitude towards me is just like hearing his father… (Interview 13, Laura).

Laura was adamant that she would not resort to her ex-partner’s use of physical punishment to control Simon’s unruly behaviour, but does note the utility of Simon knowing exactly ‘where he stands’ with his biological father. Laura’s preferred method for addressing Simon’s behaviour was through communicating to him the consequences of his actions and she acknowledges this approach was perceived by her former partner and some of the other agencies as her being ‘too soft’. Throughout Laura’s and her current partner’s interviews, they both conveyed the hope that in time communication with Simon would be the key to improving his behaviour rather than physical punishment. She also vehemently refused to adopt the advice of SENCO in regards to ensuring Simon’s school attendance by threatening him with his father. Despite escaping from this domestic violence, Laura is still regularly subjected to verbal abuse by her ex-partner over matters concerning Simon and was genuinely appreciative of the FIP key worker’s mediatory role within this situation.

As with the other female participants who had escaped previous domestic violence relationships, Laura situates her son’s present behaviour as a consequence of him witnessing her ex-partner’s domestic violence and copying his abusive attitude towards her. Rather than resorting to physical punishment, Laura adopted the practice of constantly apologising to and mediating with her neighbours. For Laura and Mark, the practice of keeping Simon indoors or removing him from the locality was regularly expressed as a particularly frustrating and guilt ridden strategy that had to be done to prevent the possibility of a future eviction. The following extract exemplifies how seriously Laura takes her son’s abusive behaviour towards her neighbours:

He uses really bad swear words that you really don’t want to hear like fuck this and fuck that and I just feel totally humiliated…He has upset a couple of the neighbours and when we first moved in things were rocky because he didn’t like
the change… I do take his behaviour very seriously and I do appreciate that no one deserves to be spoken to in that manner, but he can’t help it and anything that you do or say is only going to make him go further… It’s very hard though I’m so scared of getting evicted at some point and it’s pressure on a daily basis. It’s always there and you are conscious and always aware of how his behaviour is affecting other people. I do take it very seriously if one of my neighbour’s says he has done this or that I always apologise, I never say “oh just go away” or anything like that, even if I think it is a really stupid thing (Interview13, Laura).

From the outset, Laura conveys the sense of humiliation she feels when Simon is abusive to the neighbours and locates this later in the interview as a consequence of moving to a property with a garden, as opposed to living in a second floor flat where he was more isolated from contact with the neighbours. At no point does Laura try and excuse his ASB, and she reflects upon the considerable efforts she has made to constantly apologise to her neighbours and the mediatory practices she adopts to prevent further disputes. Interestingly, Laura also noted the dynamics of age and how older residents are more sympathetic to her situation than most of the younger ones. The pressure of constantly supervising Simon and worrying about possibly being evicted was regularly expressed by Laura and her partner, but both felt they were coming to trust Simon to behave outdoors more since working with CAMHS. As with the other female participants (see previous chapter), when Laura returns to commenting upon the practice of constantly apologising and mediating with her neighbours this is again done through the issue of maternal non-respectability and comparisons with inadequate mothers, and not being conceived of as ‘one of those bad mums who don’t do nothing’. Laura also situated her efforts to appease her neighbours by reflecting upon her previous experiences of living on a violent, drug fuelled estate and making further comparisons with ‘bad mothers’ and their unruly children. These comparisons have been noted in other qualitative research, as McKenzie (2015) notes, from her excellent and thought provoking research on an infamous Nottingham council estate being perceived as a ‘bad mum’ was a constant fear for the female residents. Furthermore, McKenzie attributes this fear to the fact that ‘when you are valued through motherhood, and you, in turn, value motherhood, it is important that you are a ‘good mum, and that others see you as such’ (ibid: 108; see also Measor, 2013). Laura and her partner were actively concentrating upon their home environment so Simon will not want to play out on the street and how despite suffering
from financial constraints they remove their family from the locality as much as feasibly possible.

6.3 Setting Boundaries to Avoid Further Allegations of ASB

‘The last time I tried to stop him going out he punched me in face and he got one back from me’.

The practice of keeping, or attempting to keep, their children indoors or in close proximity to their property was a prominent strategy employed by the participants to prevent further allegations of ASB against their household. For some of the lone-female participants their attempts to keep their children indoors intensified intra-familial conflict and incidents of parental abuse against them. As with the above extracts, these attempts to keep their primarily male children indoors and the conflict that often followed were frequently situated by the lone-female participants as a consequence of their sons copying the abusive tendencies of their violent fathers, who no longer resided in the familial home. It has been suggested that this primarily gendered phenomenon constitutes ‘one of the most under-acknowledged and under-researched forms of family violence’ (Hunter, Nixon & Parr, 2010: 264 original emphasis; Condry and Miles, 2014; 2015; Holt and Retford, 2013) especially within the context of the UK. Moreover, and as with my research, this socially learned behaviour from former partners is accompanied by the child inverting the parent-child relationship and insisting they are now ‘in charge’ of the familial home (see also Hunter, Nixon and Parr, 2010; Condry and Miles, 2014, 2015). The practice of trying to keep their children indoors, or setting boundaries upon what time their children have to come in at night, in order to prevent further incidents of ASB also intensified intra-familial conflict. This conflict was largely marked by the constant verbal abuse of parent/s and siblings and could escalate into further violent episodes:

He just says ‘fuck off slut’...It feels like he hates me, I know he misses his dad but what can I do? I can’t make his dad show interest he isn’t bothered about either of his boys. But that’s the bit I can’t work out, he was shit scared of his dad when he was here and now he is turning out the same...The last time I tried to stop him going out he punched me in the face and he got one back from me, I have always said to him if you ever hit me you will get one back...His dad had a vile temper especially when he was pissed and I think we all knew to stay out of his way. But I had enough of the beatings and got rid but I think my eldest blames me coz he
hardly sees him now only birthdays and Christmas if he is lucky. He thinks he is the man of the house now… (Interview 5, Liz).

Liz locates her son’s abusive behaviour and hatred towards her as a consequence of him no longer having regular contact with his father. She also made comparisons between her eldest son and her ex-partner’s behaviour and how her failed attempts to set boundaries could end in violent confrontations. Liz reflects upon her previously violent relationship and how her eldest son would not behave as he currently does if his father was still present. This again illustrates how some of the lone-female parents who escaped domestic violence backgrounds struggled to maintain control of their children without their violent former partner’s discipline. Liz’s situation is also hampered further because of the absence of the disciplinarian and violent father and the fact that her son had taken on the ‘man of the house’ role, attempting to control both his mother and younger brother. Of all the parent/s in this research, only Liz mentioned retaliating during a violent confrontation with her son, and as we have seen the rest vehemently refused to adopt the violent measures used by former partners. This point is significant and again contradicts governmental literature that insists, ‘in many cases mothers used violence on their children to discipline them’ (Casey, 2012: 56). However, government discourse on ‘troubled’ families does note the prevalence and the normality of violence both within and outside of the household:

Violence appears in many cases to be endemic—not just domestic violence between parents but violence between siblings, between parent and child, outside the house and inside the house. Violence, verbal and physical abuse was described in an almost matter of fact way… (Casey, 2012: 2).

Casey’s use of the term ‘in an almost matter of fact way’ is particularly interesting, as this is exactly how the participants’ experiences of domestic violence and/or sexual abuse (even whilst in institutional care) are treated throughout the report. The definition of what actually constitutes adolescent to parent violence has only recently received statutory attention and there remains a scarcity of suitable support and legislation, and even now only those over the age of sixteen are
held accountable for perpetrating domestic violence. However, according to the Home Office, Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (AVPA) entails a pattern of behaviour:

This can include physical violence from an adolescent towards a parent and a number of different types of abusive behaviour, including damage to property, emotional abuse, and economic/financial abuse. Violence and abuse can occur together or separately. Abusive behaviours can encompass, but are not limited to, humiliating language and threats, belittling a parent, damage to property and stealing from a parent and heightened sexualised behaviours…Although practitioners may be required to respond to a single incident of APVA, it is important to gain an understanding of the pattern. It is also important to understand the pattern of behaviour in the family unit; siblings may also be abused or be abusive. There may also be a history of domestic abuse, or current domestic abuse occurring between the parents of the young person. It is important to recognise the effects of APVA may have on both the parent and the young person and to establish trust and support for both. (Home Office, 2015: 12).

Despite a relative absence of criminological research into APVA a range of factors have been identified as possible explanations: substance misuse; mental health issues; learning difficulties; and/or a familial history of domestic violence (Condry and Miles, 2013, 2015; Holt and Retford, 2013; Home Office, 2015). It has been previously noted that failed attempts to curtail APVA led to mothers experiencing feelings of shame, guilt and self-blame (Hunter, Nixon and Parr, 2010; Holt, 2011; Holt and Retford, 2013). For Holt (2011)48, there were three predominant discursive themes explicated in her research into the parental experiences of being subjected to APVA: the emotional terrain; the psychological characteristics of the child as perpetrator; and parental responses. The first, emotional terrain, refers to the parent/s’ narrative accounts of facing violence from their children and primarily entailed drawing upon discourses of guilt and fear. The second, the psychological theme, involved the parent/s characterizing their violent children through metaphors that illustrated the uncontrollable, unpredictable, inevitable and pathological nature of the violence they were being exposed to. The final theme, that of parental responses,

48 Holt (2011) analysed open message boards on 18 UK based parenting support websites to explicate the experiences of parent/s subjected to parental violence.
included attempts to manage the violence inflicted upon them through employing sanctions and seeking support from mental health agencies and the police.

In regards to my participants however, feelings of guilt and self-blame were primarily situated within the context of their children being previously exposed to domestic violence and were combined with a sense of relief that they had escaped from such relationships. The psychological theme was evident but was framed within the context of believing their children were essentially mimicking the behaviour of their former domestically violent partners. In relation to parental responses, the participants being subjected to forms of AVPA were actively seeking support from their FIP key worker and the other agencies involved, but were extremely reluctant to inform their key worker of further incidents (see Chapter 7). Nonetheless, and as with previous research into parent/s’ experiences of APVA noted above, the participants in my research also vividly expressed an absence of hope in relation to improving their problematic relationships with their children. It has also been suggested that this lack of hope is further attenuated through ad hoc interventions from practitioners confronting AVPA and can engender rather perverse outcomes for the parent/s concerned. For example, the case of a mother being threatened with prosecution for abandonment for wanting to evict her violent son, and a mother who got her son arrested for assaulting her but was then held financially accountable for his subsequent fine and because of this she refused to contact the police if further assaults occurred (Holt and Retford, 2013). The complex issue of how multi-agency interventions attempt to address APVA will be returned to in Chapter 7.

In my research it was primarily male children who inverted the child/parent relationship and attempted to rule the household, however, for the eldest female participant interviewed during my research it was her daughter. Marion was 57 years old and was living with her 17 year old son and 14 year old daughter, Stacy. Marion had divorced her children’s father ten years ago and both she and her former husband were threatened with eviction by the council because of Stacy’s ASB. Although estranged, Marion and her former husband Geoff were initially threatened with eviction from their separate properties because they lived only a few hundred yards apart on the same estate. However, the threat of eviction for Geoff was later dropped because Stacy’s ASB was only committed whilst she stayed at her mother’s residence. This ASB largely involved her verbally abusing other residents and complaints over noise, Stacy was also on an ABC with the
local Youth Offending Team (YOT), and Marion and Geoff had been working with the FIP for nearly a year.

Stacy would regularly stay at both her parent’s homes and Marion and Geoff (who were both interviewed) had been working with the FIP for six months at the time of their initial interviews. I separately interviewed both Marion and Geoff on two occasions, primarily because of the fact that none of Stacy’s ASB was committed at her father’s house so I wanted to ascertain why this was the case. It became evident that the primary reason Stacy was committing ASB only whilst at her mother’s was because Marion worked part-time in the evenings and was unable to supervise her, and because her father would not let her stay at his property under any circumstances if she misbehaved. Marion’s work obligations (working to 11.00pm) meant that she was not only unable to supervise Stacy in the evenings. Furthermore, Stacy would often go back out later in the night when her mother slept. A further reason for re-interviewing was because Stacy’s ASB had escalated into violent assaults and the racist abuse of other residents and was shortly due in court for these offences, and both Marion and Geoff were facing further court sanctions because of her non-attendance at school.

Despite the fact that Stacy lived between two properties, it was only her father (as the primary carer) who received any child benefit for her which placed considerable financial difficulties upon Marion. Donna, the estranged couple’s FIP key worker, was alarmed at this situation and had tried unsuccessfully to get Geoff to sign the child benefit over to Marion. There was also a situation in which the FIP had given Geoff money to take Stacy on holiday to a caravan park and he accepted the money, but then refused to go on the holiday with her or return the money. These financial constraints meant that Stacy would stay at her father’s house on some occasions because there was no food at her mother’s, but he was currently refusing to let her stay or eat at his property if she failed to attend school. Whilst at her mother’s, Stacy would refuse to go to school and the agencies involved wanted Marion to remove Stacy from the house in the morning, lock the backdoor and not let her gain entry during school hours. Marion fervently refused to expel Stacy from her home during school hours because of concerns over her safety if she still didn’t attend school and roamed the streets all day. Living under the threat of eviction had also intensified the conflict between Marion and her daughter and Stacy was using it to blackmail her mother for money, clothes and other consumer items. This blackmail would involve Stacy
accosting her mother in the street and going into her mother’s garden late at night and threatening to shout and swear to disturb the neighbours. The following extract is Marion’s response to whether she has tried setting boundaries for Stacy:

…She is so demanding and if she wants something she wants it there and then. It’s blackmail really; she is blackmailing me all the time if I don’t give her what she wants she starts trouble…She has grabbed me in the street and says I want to go down Primark (clothes shop) and if I say no she will grab me in front of everyone and say that she will follow me everywhere…She has tried to stop me getting out of the house before when she just stood in front of the door, I said to her ‘you are just taking over’; I said to her ‘who is the mum me or you’? I’m on anti-depressants it’s making me so bad…She said only last night in the bedroom at about half past eleven that on Saturday can she have two boys and two girls sleeping over and staying overnight, and if I don’t she going to cause trouble. I said ‘you are joking’ and she said ‘think about it mum’ (Interview 7, Marion).

Marion perceives her attempts to set boundaries for Stacy as futile and recounts how she has been blackmailing her for expensive consumer items since receiving the threat of eviction. This blackmail not only causes Marion severe financial difficulties but is also used by Stacy to control who she can have for sleepovers at her mother’s property. These attempts to control and blackmail her mother are not confined to the home. Marion reflects upon how Stacy is inverting the parent/child relationship and trying to control her through threatening to cause more ASB at her property and instigate the eviction, and the consequences this is having upon her mental health. Marion refused to follow her ex-husband’s practice of not feeding Stacy during school hours or the suggestion from the council that she should lock her daughter out of her house during school time. Her reluctance was framed within the context of Stacy’s personal safety even though this intensified conflict with Geoff. During her interview she made several references to her desire not to get involved in further conflict with her ex-husband and how he regularly criticised her for not following the advice of the agencies involved or for being ‘too soft’ with Stacy.

Marion also conveyed throughout her interviews, how totally disillusioned and stressed she was with not only attempting to stop Stacy from committing more ASB but also trying to make Stacy
attend school, and how she was scared of being fined and/or imprisoned for her daughter’s truancy. She readily accepted that her attempts to get Stacy to acknowledge the gravity of the situation were failing and that Geoff’s stricter parenting practices meant her daughter’s verbal abuse was only directed at her. I could not fail but to have sympathy for Marion’s situation in which she faced eviction, financial hardship, and even the prospect of imprisonment whilst being verbally abused and blackmailed by her daughter. Marion acknowledged that for the various agencies involved and her former husband she is too lenient with Stacy and believes all involved consider her to be a ‘bad mother’.

It became evident after interviewing both Marion and her ex-husband that their parenting practices differed greatly. Geoff, who was 53 years old and lived on benefits, had a more ‘tough love’ approach in which he would refuse to have Stacy stay at his home or even feed her if she failed to attend school. Although there was no evidence that he used physical punishment to control Stacy he certainly had a zero tolerance of any of kind misbehaviour, and unlike Marion, made it clear that if Stacy got her mother evicted he would place her into care rather than have her at his property full-time. It was also apparent that Geoff had a total lack of respect for his former wife’s parenting practices and in his first interview (when he was also under the threat of eviction) he bemoaned the fact he was being held jointly responsible for Stacy’s ASB. This acrimony over parenting practices and parental responsibility meant that multi-agency meetings with Marion and Geoff would often end in disagreement and both parties were appreciative of their FIP key worker’s mediatory role within this situation. The following extract is Geoff’s response to the question of why Stacy listens to him and not her mother. He recounts a recent incident in which he intervened after Stacy had stolen from her mother:

There are no rules there whatsoever; she (Stacy) does exactly what she wants. Her mum just lets her get on with it and would do anything for an easy life...Her mum (Marion) went to work the other day and just before she went to work she was on the phone to me and said that £80 was missing out of her cash point. What had happened was that before she was meant to be coming to see me she (Stacy) had been up in her mum’s bedroom and taken the cash point card out of her mum’s bag, and knew the pin number...So she went round to the local Indian paper shop that has a cash point machine outside and took eighty quid out...So anyway she eventually admits it and I told her I want the money back now and she gave me
sixty quid because she had already bought a pair of jeans. It was obviously all planned (Interview 8, Geoff).

Geoff criticises Marion’s parenting through her inability to set rules or boundaries for their daughter and bemoans the fact he lends her money for necessities such as electricity and food. Throughout Marion’s interviews she expressed what a totally humiliating experience it was to have to go to her ex-husband for financial assistance for Stacy. Nonetheless, when Marion realises that Stacy has stolen money out of her account she immediately turns to Geoff for help to rectify the situation and through his intervention most of the money is recovered. Geoff recalls how the threat of the police was the only way to make Stacy admit what she had done and return some of the money she stole. When I re-interviewed Geoff, I wanted to probe further why Stacy listens to him and not her mother. The following is Geoff’s response to a question about whether he was still living under the threat of eviction:

I’m not under the threat anymore. They said that I was at first because of all the trouble over her mum’s house but then they looked at it again and said there was absolutely no reason to threaten me because there has not been one single complaint from around my way…I said if you want to run wild stay at your mother’s but you are not doing it here, I’m not putting my tenancy under threat…She wouldn’t dare swear at me absolutely not she knows that there is a line and knows different to that but every so often she will forget herself and raise her voice and I say “don’t raise your voice at me” and that I know you get away with it over there and that might give you a false sense of what you can get away with, but you can’t here, not in this house… (Interview 18, Geoff).

Geoff elaborated on why he is no longer being jointly threatened with eviction and this is primarily due to the fact he physically dragged Stacy home and made her stay in her room after an incident when she visited a boy living under a curfew. He also conveyed his zero tolerance towards any kind of misbehaviour at his property and how he threatens to send her back to her mother’s if she does. This ‘tough love’ approach is an effective strategy, as Stacy never swears or even raises her voice at him during disagreements and no form of ASB had ever been committed at his property. Throughout his interviews, Geoff consistently emphasised how he considered Marion’s parenting as ‘useless’. For Marion, this lack of respect was only
confounding the situation and was being copied by their daughter, and she readily admitted that when they were married it was Geoff who primarily disciplined the children. The former couple later commented upon how Marion had lost close friends for failing to curtail Stacy’s ASB, and she was even abused in the street by a neighbour for being an ‘elderly’ parent and not controlling her daughter. The effect of the eviction process upon intra-familial relationships, interactions and wider social networks will now be considered.

6.4 The Intra-Familial and Inter-Personal Consequences of the Eviction Process

‘It feels horrible, absolutely horrible because it makes us all scared’.

Unsurprisingly, the eviction process and the spectre of homelessness (and for some the care system), had deleterious consequences for the whole family and not just those responsible for committing ASB. Taken as a thematic whole, most of the participants’ narratives commented on how the pressure, anxiety and instability engendered by the eviction process was having negative consequences for their other children. These negative consequences involved the siblings of those responsible being unable to have their friends round to the detriment of their social networks and in some cases being bullied by other children, as a corollary of their siblings ASB. The following extracts are some of the participants’ responses to the effects of the eviction process upon their family as a whole. For Sandra and Grant (see Chapter 6), who were actually evicted because of the ASB of their eldest son (who was not residing at their property but only visiting), their eviction had negative consequences for their whole family. The eviction had caused the couple to temporarily end their relationship and this was negatively impacting upon their younger children’s behaviour. In particular, the couple’s middle child was now getting into trouble for his behaviour at school, ‘back chatting’ the teachers and fighting other pupils:

…He is scared that he will come out of school and that we have been moved on again…As for me and Sandra we have split up over it because she says she needs to concentrate on the boys and we have been together for years. I mean I can handle it, I’m an adult but it’s the kids, the kids can’t they had a little bit of security there. The kids need that security they had their rooms, with their stuff and their friends round then something like that happens and they are dragged away from their home and their mates…I’m with my kids constantly, I have devoted my life to them, I’m proud of that and I know I have a bad past but now
it’s like they are saying we are bad parents and that’s bullshit. It’s heart wrenching like I said not so much for myself it’s the pain I see in the kids eyes that hurts me, it was everything to them it was their stability. If you take someone’s stability away then they are not going to be stable are they? (Interview 11, Grant).

Grant situates the eviction in terms of the negative consequences for other members of the household and how his children have lost any sense of security or stability and social networks. Despite acknowledging his ‘bad past’, Grant vigorously refutes any notion that he and his partner are bad parents and bemoaned the ending of his relationship with Sandra. The loss of friends for the siblings of those who had committed ASB was also a recurring theme and largely involved parent/s not wanting people from outside of the household being subjected to ASB, or other parent/s not wanting their children to visit the ‘anti-social’ household. Moreover, for the siblings who had not committed any form of ASB, the prospect of having to move schools and lose friends because of the eviction process was causing considerable distress and further familial discord. This further discord entailed those who had not committed ASB blaming their siblings who had caused the eviction process. Although impossible to foresee the long-term detrimental consequences this instability and insecurity will have for the innocent siblings of ‘anti-social’ children, it has received absolutely no recognition within the government’s ‘troubled’ family agenda. For example, within government literature the siblings of ‘anti-social’ children are already labelled as similarly problematic. According to Casey (2012: 2), ‘some families think that their problems are often because of just one child, when that is clearly not the case’. This point is significant however, because interventions with ‘troubled’ families predicated upon the whole family approach can also punish other family members and not just those who have committed ASB. As we have seen above, the insecurity and instability engendered through the eviction process can negatively impact upon the behaviour of those who had not previously committed any ASB whatsoever. Rather disconcertingly, on an academic level, there also remains a death of critical attention paid to the negative consequences of this form of intervention. For example, the outcomes of the interventions are noted as perhaps having differing effects on family members and that ‘interventions could exacerbate problems for families, although there is no research evidence of this’ (Batty and Flint, 2012: 353). As Crossley (2015) contends however, the contemporary government’s justification for the expansion of the
Troubled Families Program (TFP) are predicated upon the spurious notion of ASB being inter-generationally transmitted amongst such families:

It has been argued that the TFP is needed because previous approaches, and ways of working with ‘troubled’ or ‘chaotic’ or ‘dysfunctional’ families, have failed. This view ignores the fact that there is no evidence that families ‘transmit’ their problems from one generation to the next. *There are some continuities within families, but there are also many discontinuities, and many children of ‘troubled’ families do not end up leading troubled lives.* Similarly, lots of children from very settled, stable family backgrounds end up experiencing severe disadvantage or being ‘troubled’ in later life, for a variety of reasons (2015: 5 emphasis added).

Moreover, and as with my research, for the vast majority of ‘troubled’ families the only characteristics shared are that they are poor, on benefits, white, inhabit social housing and have at least one member of the family suffering from disability and/or poor health and illness (Crossley, 2015). For those who had all their children committing forms of ASB the eviction process caused considerable intra-familial anxiety. For example, Jess (see chapter 5), who had received the threat of eviction because of her three sons’ and their associates’ ASB at her property (whilst she was working long hours), the uncertainty of where the family would end up was a terrifying prospect for them all. These fears were related to previously living in a domestic violence refuge and concerns the children would end up in care:

> It feels horrible, absolutely horrible because it makes us all scared and you have to constantly watch and monitor what your kids are doing…that fear of being evicted and the fear of not knowing where you are going to end up. Where are you going to end up and where are you going to live, will they put you in temporary accommodation, will they put you in a hostel? I just didn’t want that again, as a mum it felt scary, I didn’t know whether the kids would end up in care. It’s like living in limbo you never know what’s going to happen. It’s hard, it is hard and when you have the stresses of keeping the other kids at bay and keeping your kids under control. It was hard, it was so much pressure (Interview 19, Jess)
The above extract not only illustrates the considerable pressure of facing eviction and/or the children being placed in care but also the stress of having to curtail the ASB of her children’s associates, a situation that was only ultimately resolved by the intervention of the ASBU. The loss of previous friendships and social networks was also a common occurrence for the parent/s of those who had committed ASB, and as we have previously seen, conflict with former friends often occurred. This conflict primarily arose from them not letting former friends into the home to avoid further allegations of ASB. For Paula (see Chapter 5), keeping former friends away from her property had intensified neighbourhood conflict and seen her household go from being the initial perpetrators of alleged ASB, to the victims of it:

My friend used to come round and help me out but because I told her she can only bring mates with her if they are quite and she kopped (got angry) about it. Then a few weeks ago her kids started spreading rumours and it all kicked off so now I don’t go out of the flat. If I actually manage to go out at all I go out the back way so they can’t see me but if they know I’m in they all hang outside the front…They are like teenagers and they hang around outside the block and throw stones at my windows. Basically, the people that are allowed in the block still come in and bang my door really loud and press my buzzer. I’m a victim of anti-social behaviour too… (Interview 3, Paula).

Paula was being threatened with eviction because of noise complaints about her son who had ADHD (see Chapter 5) and had recently been provided with a diary by the council to log the incidents of ASB they were now being subjected to. Not only would Paula rather ‘stay in’ than face abuse from her neighbours, she would also sit indoors with the curtains drawn and would make her son ‘creep about’ to avoid both allegations of, and incidents of, ASB against her household. Later in her interview she stated, ‘this is meant to be our home and it’s more like a bloody cell’. This theme of feeling incarcerated within their own homes to avoid further allegations of ASB and/or to prevent being exposed to incidents of ASB themselves, was expressed by the majority of the lone-female parents. Moreover, and as we have previously seen, in regards to allegations and counter allegations of ASB (see Chapter 6), it was those who claimed first who claimed loudest, as their allegations were taken more seriously.
It has to be acknowledged, that ‘surveillance is a highly effective disciplinary mode of regulating conduct’ (Power, 2005: 651; Foucault, 1977). Several of the lone parent females in my research felt they were unable to have adult, intimate relationships because of the sanctions they were living under, or more precisely the surveillance. As Power (2005) notes, in her insightful qualitative research into lone-parent females living on welfare in Canada:

In several important aspects, participants felt as if their lives were controlled and regulated by Community Services. Notably, they described employment and income, relationships with men, and their abilities as mothers as falling under particular scrutiny. Surveillance, or at least the possibility of surveillance, is an important disciplinary strategy for those constituted as other’ (2005: 649 original emphasis and capitalisation).

For Kerry (see Chapter 5), who was interviewed twice, and had been previously evicted from her home and a hostel, maintaining an adult relationship was particularly problematic. This was primarily due to rules attached to her probationary tenancy that was managed by the FIP:

To me it feels like I’m not getting anywhere because of the rules we live under. I have met someone and have been seeing him about eight weeks but I can’t have him to stay at my place. John (Key worker) says it is not right letting my boyfriend stay as there is no room and that I will get in trouble because I’m on benefits. I can’t even have a proper relationship…Last weekend I stayed out at my boyfriend’s place, I didn’t intend to but someone took money out of my bag so I didn’t have the money to get a taxi but John doesn’t know I stayed out (whispers)… (Interview 15, Kerry).

The rules that Kerry alludes to are that her sons must not consume alcohol or smoke cannabis or have parties at her property and she knew she would be instantly evicted if they did. Kerry would not inform their key worker (John) if she stayed out for the night and admitted it was virtually impossible to stop her children from smoking cannabis indoors so again kept this information to herself. Furthermore, any attempts she made in setting boundaries would invariably end in abusive altercations and she had been waiting over a year for her eldest son to be referred to an
anger management course. Although the majority of the participants were positive about their FIP worker (see following chapter), as with Kerry, many of them reported incidents of withholding information to their key workers to avoid further sanctions. This resistance through the withholding of information was primarily in relation to further altercations within the home or incidents of parental abuse, or for those with older children, the smoking of cannabis and/or the consumption of alcohol.

As noted in the methodology chapter, the parent/s were all on either ‘action plans’ or ‘acceptable behaviour’ contracts with the FIP and these were largely specific to alleviating their children’s form of ASB and the concomitant necessity for improving parenting practices and setting boundaries. Those at the beginning of their interventions had informal verbal ‘action plans’, which would become formal written ‘acceptable behaviour’ contracts if ‘action plans’ were not adhered to. There were also rules set in relation to their housekeeping practices (by the FIP and social workers) which were perceived as an especially demeaning element of their interventions by the female participants. However as with Kerry, some were also on probationary tenancies (see Chapter 3) with additional rules to contend with in regards to permitted visitors. For example, Kerry was particularly frustrated that she was allowed no more than two visitors to her property especially as she also had three daughters, and in her own words, ‘I didn’t like the fact that my daughters are classed as visitors, they are my family’. I could not help but sympathise with Kerry’s situation: a long term sufferer of depression, she had the indignity of being evicted twice and because of local media coverage of the initial eviction had gained a certain notoriety. Later in her interview, she recounted an incident where she was recognised in a local shopping centre and called that ‘woman from the scum bag family’ by a passer-by.49 Perhaps being protective, or concerned with what she would divulge, when she attended her first interview both her sons came with her and it was only through gentle persuasion that they allowed me to interview her without them being present.

49 The stigmatising consequences of being deemed a ‘troubled’ family are also evident within government research (see Casey, 2012).
6.5 Conclusion

This chapter again focused upon the participants’ perceptions, relationships, interactions and contexts (Squires, 2008) by illustrating how they mediated the familial consequences of the eviction process. As such, and as with the preceding findings chapter, the overall intention was to address the existing gaps within policy and academic discourses by giving the participants a much needed voice and express in their own terms their experiences of living under this form of ASB housing sanction. This chapter commenced with the practices and strategies the participants employed to avoid further allegations of ASB against their household. In a practical sense, these measures ranged from stopping noise-related ASB to attempting to keep their children permanently indoors and thus feeling incarcerated themselves. However, in a behavioural sense curtailing their children’s ASB and setting boundaries was far more problematic and significantly intensified intra-familial conflict and in some cases incidents of parental abuse.

This chapter again exemplified the salience of the dual themes of ‘non-respectability’ and the critical disciplinary role of gender. In regards to the former, the female participants located their various attempts at curtailing their children’s ASB through comparisons with other ‘bad’ mothers devoid of ‘respectability’. Moreover, negative aspersions upon their housekeeping practices were situated as signs of ‘non-respectability’ and perceived as a particularly demeaning part of the intervention by the female participants. This critical attention upon the negative aspects of the domestic visit element of FIPs has been largely omitted within academic literature. In regards to the latter, and the critical disciplinary role of gender, although previous research has noted how lone-parent females are primarily held accountable for the ASB of males (Hunter and Dixon, 2001; Carr, 2007; 2010), this chapter extended and enhanced this gendered analysis by exemplifying how women who had escaped from domestically violent relationships were adamant that they would not resort to the violent and draconian disciplinary practices of their former partners to control their primarily male children. This form of resistance entailed not informing the FIP or the other tutelary agencies of further incidents of APVA or ASB.

Furthermore, the concept of the critical disciplinary of gender has also been further extended and directly related to how some mediated the familial consequences of the eviction process. For instance, this chapter illustrated how some of the primarily male children from these formerly domestically violent relationships were now subjecting their mothers, and in some cases siblings,
to various forms of abuse and were simultaneously attempting to control the household. The parent/s of these children were not only attempting to curb their children’s ASB (both within and outside of the familial home), but also the behaviour of other youths causing disturbances, and desperately trying to appease the temporal demands of the numerous tutelary agencies involved. The issue of multi-agency fatigue (see previous chapter) was again readily apparent and related to the numerous interactions and relationships with the plethora of agencies involved. This chapter also exemplified the adverse effects the eviction process had upon other members of the household in regards to their social and interpersonal relationships, a significant factor conveniently ignored within policy literature and an aspect of FIPs that requires far more academic scrutiny. For some of the siblings of those who were committing ASB, they would have fears of not only homelessness and/or the care system but also of having to move from their schools and away from their friends. Those being held responsible for others who had committed ASB were also living under various forms of surveillance to the detriment of their inter-personal relations and wider social networks, and some felt they were being prevented from having intimate adult relationships. The final of my three findings chapters, will now elucidate the participants’ perceptions of the FIP and their recommendations for the agencies involved and other families that may become involved in the eviction process, and as such will continue to contribute to the substantial gaps within the existing TFP literature.
CHAPTER 7

Preventative Measures to Avoid the ‘Troubled Family’ Label: The Participants’ Experiences of the FIP and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

As noted in the literature review, there is a distinct division within academic literature that has considered FIPs between those who maintain this form of intervention has primarily positive outcomes for the families involved (White et al., 2008; Flint, 2011; Batty and Flint, 2012; inter alia), and more critical commentaries that seriously doubt the efficacy of such projects (Garret, 2007a; 2007b; Crossley, 2015). However, to perceive FIPs as either inherently ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is too simplistic as these projects are implemented and delivered with local variations (Parr, 2011). These local differences seemingly suggest that it is impossible to situate ‘the core “essence” of the FIP agenda’ (Parr, 2009a: 1270) and highlight the necessity for more research from both critics and supporters of this form of familial intervention. This requirement for more research into the local implementation of FIPs is especially salient as the current government is encouraging the extension of these projects through third sector organisations. Essentially, and regardless of whether such interventions are perceived as inherently positive or negative for the families involved, there is undoubtedly a need for a more refined analysis of the impacts and outcomes of FIPs (Batty and Flint, 2012). This chapter will address these omissions in regards to impacts and outcomes and enhance current policy literature by providing a more nuanced analysis of a local FIP.

However, it has to also be acknowledged that policies aimed at marginalized and vulnerable families have ‘not been rooted in dialogue’ with those on the receiving end of such interventions and generally ‘the research base is very weak’ (Morris and Featherstone, 2010: 563), and alternative forms of support require detailed deliberation (Batty and Flint, 2012). The current
government’s insistence that the TFP is a successful and necessary form of intervention (DCLG, 2015) also requires more critical scrutiny:

We do not know how many ‘turned around’ families are still experiencing domestic violence, poor mental health or other issues such as poor quality or overcrowded housing, poverty or material deprivation, because this information has not been reported by the government. At present, we are also not aware of whether families consider their lives have been ‘turned around’ by their involvement with the program, or whether their lives remained ‘turned around’ after the support was withdrawn. (Crossley, 2015: 6)

Indeed, and as noted in the previous findings chapters of this thesis, it could be more apposite to consider those families threatened with eviction and/or the care system as having their lives ‘turned upside down’ rather than ‘turned around’. This, as the last of my findings chapters, will address these significant impasses noted above, by focusing upon how the parent/s contextualised and perceived their interactions and relationships with the FIP. This will include a focus on the positive and negative aspects of working with the FIP and the respondents’ own recommendations for preventing, alleviating, and improving their current situations. As such, this chapter will suggest that the TFP represents a vivid exemplar of the criminalisation of social policy thesis (see Squires, 2006; 2008; Squires and Lea, 2013). The participants’ recommendations will be conjoined with my own suggestions and will be drawing upon, and pulling together, the central themes elucidated in the preceding findings chapters. This chapter will provide valuable insights for those on the receiving end of similar interventions, academics, policy makers and practitioners.

This chapter will commence with a discussion of the generic commonalities of FIPs and then continue with the participants’ views of their involvements with the FIP, and in particular focus upon their perceptions of the levels of support they received and their relationships and interactions with the key workers involved. The chapter will include extracts from participants in various stages of their intervention and the eviction process. The primary reason for this is that some of the participants had stabilised their tenancies and/or were near the end of the intervention and at the exit planning stage, whereas others had just commenced or were at
various stages of working with the FIP. For instance, some had already been evicted and were living in temporary accommodation provided by the local authority or supplied and managed by the charity, whilst others were still residing in their homes. For these participants, the spectre of homelessness and/or losing their children to the care system if they failed to curb the ASB of other members of their household was an ongoing and distressing reality. Other than two households, one who was at ‘future risk’ of eviction because of the ASB of their son (see Chapters 5 and 6), and the other who left the area and the FIP prior to completing an exit plan (see Mandy, Interview 1, Chapter 6), all of the other participants became involved with the charity’s FIP after the eviction process had commenced.

7.2 The Generic Commonalities of FIPs

Before explicating the participants’ experiences of the FIP it will be firstly necessary to outline some of the inherent commonalities of this form of familial intervention. On a generic level, as Batty and Flint (2012) note, FIPs are predicated upon the relationships and dynamics between the families involved and their key worker. Moreover, the project roles of key workers include: initial engagement with the families; assessments; development of support plans and/or behavioural contracts; the provision of support; and exit planning. In regards to the initial engagement and assessments these are done through home visits, multi-agency panels and the Common Assessment Frameworks (CAF). These assessments are linked to the formulating of support plans and in some FIPs made into a contract with the families. The provision of support refers to emotional, practical, financial assistance, and liaising and advocacy with the various other agencies involved. Emotional support entails home visits, phone calls, and listening to the families involved, whereas practical support includes domestic management (cleaning, DIY) advice, parenting support (bedtime routines, health and diet advice), the provision of parenting classes, providing leisure activities and dealing with other agencies. The financial element of support consists of managing debts, benefit entitlements, the purchasing of essential household items and providing leisure activities. Finally, the advocacy and liaising element of support also includes informing other agencies (social services, housing and education) of family issues and

50 From my own experiences of youth work, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is a standardised approach for undertaking an assessment of a child’s additional needs and deciding how such needs should be met. It can be used by various practitioners across a range of children’s services.
needs, co-ordinating with and referring to specialist agencies such as CAMHS, SENCO, youth support services and drug and alcohol misuse agencies if required. In some projects the key worker becomes the primary coordinator of multi-agency support but this is not a universal practice (see later in this chapter). Furthermore, the exit planning role of key workers involves the process of families successfully ending the intervention and the project reassigning resource expenditure and responsibility for the families to other agencies (see also Parr, 2011). This point is particularly salient, especially in regards to ‘successful’ outcomes and seemingly suggests that once the FIP is completed those deemed as ‘troubled’ families are essentially just being reassigned back to the agencies they previously encountered.

Nonetheless, there has been an absence of attention paid to ‘the sequencing of outcomes or the psychological and motivational responses leading to behaviour changes’ (Batty and Flint, 2012: 353-354). As noted by Crossley (2015) above, any consideration of outcomes is extremely problematic and has to acknowledge that factors such as domestic violence, Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (APVA), poor mental health, inadequate housing and poverty require long-term and sustainable solutions beyond the length of the interventions provided by FIPs. With regards to outcomes, Batty and Flint (op cit), identify a typology of three general categories of intervention: crisis management; stabilising; and transformative, and they suggest previous FIP evaluations have paid little attention to the crisis management element. The crisis management facet involves responding to trauma and decreasing immediate harm or risk, and concentrates on the following: offending; conflict with neighbours; mental and physical health; emotional and relationship breakdown; pregnancy; enforcement sanctions; the continuation of services provision; and the prevention of incidents of domestic violence and/or child protection proceedings. The stabilising aspect of outcomes include: reducing risky sexual behaviour and/or alcohol and drug misuse; guaranteeing children’s school attendance and making sure their clients attend support service meetings; managing family dynamics and relationships; managing relationships with neighbours and the other agencies involved; and the more general management of the domestic milieu. The transformative element involves both ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ outcomes and in the former this includes improving: self-esteem and self-confidence and personal and social proficiencies; physical and mental health; intra-familial dynamics and relationships; the domestic environment; and fostering more aspirations. The latter ‘hard’ outcomes entail: improving educational attendance and attainment or training and employment
opportunities, preventing further incidents of ASB and/or becoming involved in the criminal justice system; reducing or ending risky behaviours such as drug or alcohol abuse, risky sexual practices and/or associating with problematic peers; and finally preventing children going into the care system and/or eviction proceedings.

This prevention of losing children to the care system and/or the prospect of homelessness is a rather a circular form of outcome. As previously noted, these sanctions are initially utilised to gain compliance with TFP and then used to represent positive outcomes if no longer deemed necessary. According to an anonymous frontline TFP care worker, the programme’s claims of successful outcomes are predicated upon the coercion of vulnerable families rather than the provision of support, and as such represents ‘a fraudulent scam’:

The programme is used as a means to bridge the hole created by cuts in local government funding. Refusal to engage in this programme is therefore not accepted by Troubled Families process managers, who encourage staff to use ‘creative’ tactics to make up the numbers. This has led to disadvantaged families being coerced into joining the programme through intimidating and potentially harmful ‘hard sells’. The Troubled Families programme has used established referral processes in order to continue the expansion of the policy. This means that staff may have cases suddenly re-classified as a Troubled Families case, or be forced to nominate cases against their better judgement and ethics…It is most distressing to consider that a programme which aims to help families with multiple disadvantages is actually subjecting them to coercion and harassment. (Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, 2016, no page number).

These forms of sanction and their previous multi-agency involvements (see Chapter 5) suggest that interventions directed at ‘troubled’ families are ‘increasing the power exercised over already vulnerable families through the emphasis on securing engagement regardless of whether families wanted to be engaged’ (Bond-Taylor, 2014: 9). Moreover, rather than perceiving these interventions as primarily positive and empowering for those on the receiving end, as Bond-Taylor further maintains, it has to be acknowledged that FIPs are essentially reinforcing established relationships between the families involved and local statutory services:
‘Troubled Families’ projects work to build bridges between families and services, where they have become eroded through an extended history of intervention and coercion. Families are ‘empowered’ only in so much as they are compliant and accept the normalising discourses of the services through engagement with their agendas for change. Family empowerment, therefore, may enable the family to resist specific attempts at the exercise of power and control by certain agents of the state (such as removal of the children from the family home) whilst remaining subject to a more general exercise of state power through the continued dominance of prevailing discourses around family life and parental responsibility (2014: 12 original emphasis).

The complex issue of empowerment will be returned to later in this chapter, but as noted in the literature review of this thesis, following on from New Labour and the Coalition, the current Conservative government is acutely aware that engagement with the TFP is only initially and ultimately secured by threatening those considered as ‘troubled’ families with the prospect of, or actual eviction, and/or losing children to the care system. According to Hoffman, Mackie and Pritchard (2010), within the social housing sector, a significant proportion of households facing enforcement actions (but who then decline supportive interventions to manage their ASB) will lose their homes and future housing entitlements. Moreover, for social housing tenants in particular, the efficacy of sanctions such as eviction are also extremely doubtful:

The enforcement approach is ineffective to resolve anti-social behaviour as the problem is likely to be transferred elsewhere without dealing with its underlying causes. In short, the impact of enforcement for society is limited, whilst for households in social housing the consequence is potentially catastrophic (Hoffman, Mackie and Pritchard, 2010: 40-41 emphasis added).

Indeed, for those who fail to comply with the TFP and instead move into the private rented sector (see Chapter 6) and concomitantly risk their future social housing entitlements there is a genuine possibility of them becoming ‘a class of housing outcasts’ (Burney, 1999: 7; Hoffman, Mackie and Pritchard, 2010: 40). As Parr (2011) astutely contends, in relation to the positive aspects of FIPs, these might be more effective if separated from demonising and punitive practices and discourses. At issue here, however, is whether a local FIP can ever really decouple itself from wider political discourses and practices especially when the possibility of eviction remains the
primary sanction at their disposal. Moreover, the significant issue of whether the families in my research would have engaged or complied with the FIP without these eviction sanctions is difficult to ascertain, but only two of the households stated they had considered self-referral to the charity, and this was again after the eviction process had commenced.

7.3 The Participants’ Experiences of the FIP

'It is great working with her, she is the only one that listens’

With regards to the parent/s in my research, their interventions all contained aspects of crisis management, stabilising and the transformative elements noted above. This triad of outcomes were not mutually exclusive however, as there was considerable overlap between these forms of support. For instance, the crisis management and stabilising elements both involved key workers mediating with neighbours and the various other agencies and the continuation of service provision. However, the prevention of domestic violence facet was not really evident, as half of the parent/s were still experiencing forms of child-parent abuse. Furthermore, the stabilising and transformative elements in relation to securing educational attendance were still problematic and ongoing issues for some of the parent/s (see Chapter 6 and later in this chapter). The reducing or cessation of associations with problematic peers was also perceived as particularly difficult to achieve. As previously noted, for some, ending relationships with previous associates could often culminate in further neighbourhood disputes and conflict (see Chapter 5). Moreover, for the parent/s being held accountable for the ASB committed by their children and their associates, the local ASBU was often cited as the only agency that ultimately rectified this situation by implementing banning orders under ABCs and Dispersal Orders (DOs):

I had to clamp down on my kids and stop the other lads from coming in and they would come round and try and kick in my door because I wouldn’t let them in. And they just all turned on me in the end but I got through it with the help of Steve (ASBU)…The trouble with the lads has stopped, I don’t see them because they are not allowed in the block because they have banning orders so I think the ASBU have taken them to court to stop them entering the block. To be honest I wouldn’t have been able to stop the lads coming round on my own; they were just taking the piss out of me (Interview 19, Jess).
Although Jess was positive about the FIP throughout her interview and was at the exit planning stage of the intervention with the FIP, and had stabilised her council tenancy, she was acutely aware that it was only the ASBU that had the legal power to prevent local youths from committing ASB at her property. This realisation that the efficacy of the FIP was ultimately determined by the actions of the other agencies involved was reiterated by several participants. This is perhaps unsurprising, as it has recently been suggested that many of the positive outcomes claimed by the government are actually the corollary of previously established multi-agency involvements rather than from the efforts of the TFP (Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, 2016).

In relation to the ‘hard’ outcomes inherent within the transformative element, it was not only those commencing their interventions with the FIP who feared the prospect of eviction and/or losing their children to the care system. Some of the parent/s coming to the end of their interventions still remained uncertain as to whether or not they would still have to face these sanctions (see later in this chapter). As for the transformative elements and the focus upon the reduction of risky behaviours such as alcohol and/or drug misuse, these were perceived by the parent/s as factors particularly difficult to control in regards to their children and could intensify familial conflict (see Chapter 6). Moreover, and in a similar vein to the non-reporting of incidents of parental abuse, some parent/s would not divulge their children’s alcohol or drug usage to their key worker for fear of further sanctions. In regards to ‘risky’ sexual practices, as noted in Chapter 6, several of the lone parent females felt they were unable to have any form of intimate, adult relationships because of the sanctions and tutelary surveillance they lived under.

Furthermore, the prevalence of risky sexual behaviour and illicit drug and/or alcohol abuse are often linked with socio-economic status and being primarily evident within lower class, marginalized communities (Wiles et al., 2007; Mason et al., 2010; inter alia). However, even the most cursory analysis of some of the above categories could not fail to notice how factors such as risky sexual practices, illicit drug and alcohol abuse are not just confined to impoverished, ‘troubled’ families, but can affect every section of society regardless of material circumstances51.

51 Lord Sewell (House of Lords Deputy Speaker and Chairman of the House of Lords Privileges and Conduct Committee) had to resign following video footage of him smoking cannabis and snorting cocaine with prostitutes, and boasting about his £200 daily allowance (Ramgobin, 2015).
As noted throughout this thesis, the necessity of rectifying these perceived signs of non-respectability are evident within policy discourse and even more disconcertingly are factors largely absent from some of the less critical academic considerations of FIPs (see Batty and Flint, 2012). Moreover, it is abundantly clear that the ‘softer’ transformative elements of outcomes noted above are inextricably linked to the issue of empowerment with their focus on improving self-confidence, self-esteem and the raising of aspirations. This necessitates a consideration of not only how the TFP is implemented on a local level but also how families directly experience these empowering strategies. This chapter addresses all of the significant omissions noted above.

Of the participants in my research, three-quarters of those interviewed were positive and satisfied with the levels of support their key worker and the charity had provided. Moreover, several of the participants stated that if their key worker had become involved earlier their current situations would have been significantly improved (see later in this chapter). Interestingly, this necessity for earlier intervention was situated within the context of their FIP key worker mediating with the various tutelary agencies already involved and with the neighbours who had initially made ASB allegations against them, rather than parenting support or other forms of service provision. These recommendations in regards to mediating with neighbours reiterated some of the themes elucidated in Chapter 5.

Although levels of provision were specific to each household, generically this support entailed emotional, practical, financial assistance and advocacy with the other agencies involved. These elements of emotional, practical, financial and advocacy support were again not mutually exclusive and there was considerable overlap between these aspects of the intervention. For instance, in regards to emotional support, this involved the key worker actually listening to the families and attempting to give them voice through advocating and mediating for them with the numerous agencies involved. As previously noted (see Chapter 5), the participants often felt they were silenced within these multi-agency interactions and FIP key workers were perceived as being far less judgemental than social workers and the staff from the other agencies. Moreover, as also noted in Chapter 5, the participants often also bemoaned the discontinuity with service provision, and the general attitude of social workers, and frequently stated how it was difficult for them and their children to establish positive relationships with statutory agencies:
Paul (key worker) came along before we were threatened with eviction but the social worker is the lead on my case again now, so whereas everything went through Paul before, it now goes through my social worker. She (the social worker) is an outsider, I know she is probably professional and amazing and all that (laughs) but to us she is just a woman who pops up with bad news and threatens us. Whereas, Paul knows us, he still says the same thing as everyone else is saying, don’t get me wrong, and he says this isn’t acceptable, but have you tried this, or this isn’t acceptable and why did he (eldest son) do that and tries to get to the root of it. The social worker just says ‘stop it right now’ or this will happen and then 15 minutes later she has gone and I’m trying not to cry and the kids are going nuts because all she ever does is upset me…(Interview 1, Mandy).

Unlike the majority of the participants, Mandy states how the FIP key worker (Paul) became involved prior to her being threatened with eviction from temporary accommodation provided by the council and was the only participant to prematurely leave the FIP (see Chapter 6). Paul was initially the lead worker on Mandy’s case but had recently been replaced in this role by a social worker (because of disputed allegations of inappropriate sexual behaviour between Mandy’s current partner and her eldest daughter). Perhaps as the corollary of the discontinuity experienced from their previous statutory interactions (see Chapter 5), several of the parent/s were perturbed at the possibility of having their FIP key workers replaced in the lead case worker role by staff from other agencies. As previously noted in this chapter, the government’s TFP agenda promulgates the necessity and the utility of a lead case worker but in reality this practice is seemingly not universal (Batty and Flint, 2012). The rest of the extract above vividly illustrates Mandy and her children’s strained and, as we have previously seen (see Chapter 6), often hostile, relationship with the social worker involved and the different practices that Paul employs. As Mandy notes above, the social worker is considered an ‘outsider’, and even though Paul would still challenge and not condone the family’s unacceptable behaviour, he would seek to locate the initial causes of the problematic conduct and attempt to find solutions. For example, Paul offers advice and options for alleviating their current situation and strives to contextualise the issue, whereas the social worker uses a more overtly threatening and disciplinary approach. This fundamental communication difference between FIP key workers and other multi-agency staff was a theme commonly expressed by the majority of the participants. This is perhaps unsurprising as it has been contended that ‘troubled’ families find their relationships with social
workers in particular, extremely challenging and ‘reflecting a form of surveillance and discipline without genuine communication or any scope for negotiation’ (Bond-Taylor, 2014: 2).

The final sentence of the extract from Mandy above, also represents a further common theme inherent within all the participants’ narratives, the complex difficulties created by temporal demands upon improving behaviour. In particular, the necessity for more time to alleviate their current circumstances and the pressure of trying to curb some of their children’s or their associates’ ASB, whilst attempting to appease the tutelary agencies’ demands for more rapid behavioural improvements. This temporal requisite proved especially challenging for those who had children with suspected or previously diagnosed mental health issues (see Chapter 5), and/or those who had previously escaped from domestically violent relationships and were now experiencing forms of parental abuse (see Chapter 6). These significant themes will be returned to later in this chapter.

For some of the parent/s, their FIP key worker was perceived as being an ‘improved’ form of social worker. For instance, Sally (see Chapter 5) was coming to the end of a one year intervention with the FIP and had recently moved with her son into privately rented accommodation. As with some of the other participants, the fact her intervention was coming to an end was a daunting prospect and raises the significant question of attachment (see later in this chapter). Although Sally had essentially prevented the eviction process by renting privately, she would still be living under ‘supervised freedom’ as her son was still on the ‘at risk’ register with child services because a previously violent ex-partner had located her new address. The following extract is Sally’s response to what help had been provided by her keyworker:

She (the keyworker) does everything and is a bit like my social worker but she don’t like me saying that (laughs). My social worker is never really there she is always busy or on holiday. With Kim (FIP key worker) if I phone her up for help she will get straight on the phone and sort it. She helps me with appointments at the school and I was trying for six months to get Darren (the son) back into school before Kim came along. If I phone her up she is there straight away and she comes to interviews with me, she phones up my landlord and came to CAB with me. I’ve had four or five different social workers and Darren gets used to them, trusts them and then along comes another one. With Kim she is our bit of stability, she has been great, and we will miss her loads (Interview 6, Sally).
The above extract exemplifies the good relationships the majority of the participants had with their FIP key worker and Sally compares the high levels of support she has received to the discontinuity previously experienced with social workers. The advocacy role of her FIP key worker is evident within the context of educational provision (see later in this chapter), and mediating, and attending appointments, with the other agencies involved. This advocacy role was commonly expressed by those positive about the intervention as one of the most beneficial aspects of the support they received. Sally’s assertion that she and Darren will miss their key worker and the sense of stability and trust that has been engendered was also reiterated by other participants who viewed the intervention positively. As Parr (2011: 729) notes, for women on the receiving end of FIPs, who are socially excluded and prone to depression this ‘befriending role’ by key workers was greatly appreciated.

However, these more positive relationships with FIP key workers were only engendered through regular contact and time spent with the families involved, as the participants were often initially sceptical about any differences between social workers and FIP staff. This initial scepticism was manifested through concerns that FIP staff would be as intrusive as social workers and were essentially ‘spying’ upon the families (see Chapter 5). Nonetheless, and as with Sally, for those nearing the end of their intervention with the FIP the prospect of eviction (in some cases) had been alleviated, but their often strained interactions and relationships with social workers and the other multi-agencies were destined to continue. This point is highly significant however, the FIP may have stabilised tenancies in some cases, mediated with the other agencies, provided emotional, practical and financial support, but with the interventions only lasting between six months and a year are only really providing temporary respite for ‘troubled’ families enmeshed within the tutelary complex.

It was not only those near the end of their intervention with the FIP who were positive about the intervention. Laura and Mark (see Chapters 5 and 6), were just five weeks into their intervention with the FIP at the time of their separate interviews. These were the only parent/s who had not received a threat of eviction, but were deemed at ‘future risk’ of eviction and referred to the FIP by social workers because of Laura’s son (Simon) committing ASB by verbally abusing other residents and his own family. The following extract is Laura’s response to whether any agency could have prevented their current situation:
If I could have any agency to help I would have the FIP absolutely 100 per cent. I think that she understands a lot more because she actually comes to the house and talks about the bigger picture whereas everybody else is just interested in their one bit, whereas Kim covers everything and gets to know everything. I would rather just have Kim help with everything and sometimes she is the voice of sanity and when people suggest things she says ‘no he won’t be able to cope with that right now and yeah we need to do that but in a couple of weeks or so’…She is honest if she thinks I’m crap at something she will say this needs to change. She tells me when I have done a good job with housekeeping and things like that, so you actually get a marker so you can tell if you are doing things well and she tells me what things I still need to work on… (Interview 13, Laura).

Laura’s reference to her key worker looking at the ‘bigger picture’ whilst the other agencies were only ‘interested in their one bit’ and Kim being a ‘voice of sanity’ within multi-agency interactions were themes similarly articulated by other parent/s positive about the FIP. As with Laura, this was particularly evident when the other tutelary agencies involved made unrealistic temporal demands upon behavioural improvements. Moreover, the fact that key workers were honest and forthcoming with their opinions and suggestions for improving their current situations was also perceived by parent/s as a positive aspect of the FIP. It was not only the fact that the key workers mediated the temporal demands of the other agencies, but as with Laura above, also the positive reinforcement strategies employed by key workers that were commonly perceived by parent/s positive about the FIP as the most beneficial aspects of the intervention.

7.4 The Complex Issues of Empowerment and Attachment

‘I just don’t know what I will do when I have got myself together and she leaves’.

In heralding the TFP, Prime Minister David Cameron proclaimed that ‘we will be empowering…not making excuses for anyone, but supporting these families to take control of their lives’ (Cameron, 2011, cited by Bond-Taylor, 2014: 2). Accordingly, those critical of these ‘state discourses of empowerment’ maintain that they represent ‘a politically expedient feature of neo-liberal economic agendas’ and promulgate enhanced community participation alongside residual welfare policies and as such are merely ‘enabling the powerless to adjust to economic restructuring’ (Bond-Taylor, 2014: 5). Neoliberal welfare policies targeting problematic
populations and their behaviour, are governmental techniques and practices with ‘the ‘strategic objective of acting both through and upon the actions of people who are “free”, but who are exercising the “wrong” kind of freedom’ (Ryan (2010: 765; see also Power, 2005). Thus, the empowering assumptions inherent within the TFP agenda necessitate critical scrutiny by questioning what empowerment actually entails within the context of a local FIP and the extent to which those subjected to the interventions are really empowered (Bond-Taylor, 2014). This sub-subsection of my final findings chapter will critically examine the issue of empowerment by primarily focusing on those participants coming to the end of, or recently completing, their intervention with the FIP.

As noted above, for lone-parent females in particular, no longer having a FIP key worker was a daunting prospect and several reported they had come to over-rely upon them and expressed feelings of attachment. Although the more positive aspects of the relationships with key workers have been observed in other research (see Batty and Flint, 2012; Bond-Taylor, 2014), the issue of attachment has not been adequately considered. However, within governmental research into ‘troubled’ families the issue of attachment is noted in passing through one of the case studies:

> And then when (the Family Intervention Project worker) turned around to me and said to me...‘right that’s it, we are not coming back involved’, all I wanted to do was to like sit there and cry, I wanted to grab hold of her and everything and say to her, ‘you are not going, like that’, I thought you are staying with me and the kids, I thought we are not losing you... (Casey, 2012: 30).

This complex issue of attachment to the key workers involved is exemplified in my research by Paula, a 28 year old lone parent, threatened with eviction from her council flat because of noise complaints against her ten year old son John, who was recently diagnosed with ADHD (see Chapter 5). Paula had been working with the FIP for just over a year and the intervention was ongoing because the council had demoted her tenancy and wanted her evicted, but the FIP wanted her moved into supported housing instead. However, Paula was uncertain as to how long the intervention would continue for, but was acutely aware and expressed fears over the fact she would soon have to cope without the support of her key worker:
I actually started with Lisa (key worker) last year and basically the charity got involved straight away to help me out. I was like OK, I will try and get him (the son) to behave and I was actually quite happy to work with Lisa. I’ve opened up so much with her it is unbelievable, if I have a problem I text her straight away there is no one else, you would think I would text my mum but its Lisa. They (the FIP) have helped me out so much they really have. I just don’t know what I will do when I have got myself together and she leaves. I’m quite reliant upon them, I used to rely on Lisa a lot but I don’t so much now as I realise I’ve got to do it for myself. I can’t expect Lisa to do it all because she got into trouble for it, at one of the meetings one of the social workers said Lisa was doing too much for me (Interview 3, Paula).

From the outset of the extract, Paula notes how she was glad of the support of the FIP in attempting to improve her son’s behaviour. The phrase ‘opened up’ is employed to express how she is comfortable discussing personal problems with Lisa and this was similarly articulated by the other participants who were positive about the intervention. Moreover, Paula would text Lisa with problems and for emotional support, rather than her mum, and the fact the FIP key workers could be contacted by phone, and let them use their mobiles for calls to the various other agencies, was often cited by the parent/s as a valuable resource in both a practical and financial sense. In the latter part of the extract and consistently throughout her interview, Paula expressed her fears over how she will manage without assistance and her previous over-reliance upon Lisa (even to the extent that it was noted by social workers), but readily accepts she has to be able to cope without her support.

However, despite her intervention with the FIP soon to be coming to an end, Paula’s housing situation had still not been rectified and she was extremely scared at the prospect of being moved to a hostel with her son, and equally desperate to move away from her current property and to be accommodated in supported housing. This point is significant, and in regards to the complex issue of ‘successful outcomes’ and their crisis management, stabilising and transformative elements, exemplifies how the FIPs’ efforts at empowering families to make positive improvements are often severely hampered by other factors such as: inadequate housing; impoverishment; mental health service delivery and/or the relevant educational provision (see
later in this chapter). Moreover, it is essential to recognise the intricacies inherent within these ongoing relationships with the other agencies that ‘troubled’ families endure.

All of the participants who were positive about their interactions with FIP seemed genuinely appreciative of their keyworkers’ role in providing a buffer between the family and the other agencies involved. With regards to housing, as with Paula, several of the lone parent females felt their current circumstances would only ultimately improve if they lived in localities away from the properties they inhabited when the eviction process commenced. This necessity to escape from their problematic locales and alleviate their current circumstances is illustrated by Paula, who later in her interview stated, ‘I think the whole situation would go away if I moved away from these people, I think the neighbours don’t realise they are doing me a favour being evil because I want to get out’. FIPs not only have to mediate for the families on a multi-agency level but also have to address wider communal conflict (see also Chapter 5):

Empowering disadvantaged families therefore further needs to consider the extent to which families are able to challenge community responses, rather than merely conform to community expectations, which may reflect an intolerance of the vulnerable ‘other’ (Bond-Taylor, 2014: 11 emphasis added).

The majority of the participants, regardless of whether they were positive or negative about the FIP, implicitly reiterated the importance of empowerment and acknowledged the necessity of re-taking control of their lives and coping without the FIP or the other agencies. As previously noted, this was perceived as being especially problematic because of the temporal constraints upon behavioural improvements imposed by the other agencies involved. It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which the participants were being genuinely empowered (see later in this chapter) or were just repeating their key worker’s and the other agencies’ discourses of empowerment52. For instance, as noted in the methodology chapter of this thesis, those

52 For a detailed discussion of how the concept of empowerment is interpreted by mental health practitioners (see Weiss, MacMullin & Lunsky, 2015), social workers (see Adams, 2008; Turner & Maschi, 2015), and see Bond-Taylor (2014) in regards to how FIP staff translate the government’s notions of empowering ‘troubled’ families (see Cameron, 2011).
considered ‘troubled’ families are well versed in having to present a positive picture of family life to conform to professional discourses and practices. Nonetheless, and in a similar vein to previous research, the majority of the participants expressed how the key worker had helped them improve their self-esteem and parenting confidence and as such ‘psychological development was central to their description of the processes of empowerment’ (Bond-Taylor, 2014: 10):

Yvonne (FIP Key worker) comes round once or twice a week and helps me with finances and we talk about problems with the boys and any problems with home life. She just generally supports us and gives us guidelines, guidance, she doesn’t actually do it for us, and I do it all but she organises everything for me. I feel stronger now and the kids like her a lot and they interact with her. But she feels that everything is going well and I did an action plan and I go through it and check off what I have done so there are only a few things to do now and then Yvonne will do an exit plan which is good. I will miss her but I feel I can cope with the kids better now… (Interview 19, Jess).

The above extract again reiterates how the FIP key workers primarily offer guidance and advice but also ensure the parent/s get in the habit of managing their households for themselves. Those parent/s positive about the intervention frequently cited how the FIP had given them more confidence in relation to their parenting practices and how the key worker had engendered good relationships with their children. The multifaceted issue of empowerment will be returned to in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

This perceived improvement in self-esteem and parenting confidence was achieved through their key worker attempting to help them alleviate their household’s ASB, by implementing and sustaining behavioural improvements (reducing noise levels and avoiding familial and neighbourhood conflict), setting boundaries for their children in relation to set meal and bed times and how long the children were permitted to stay out (if not kept permanently indoors) and as previously noted, being able to contact their key worker in times of particular stress for emotional support and advice. This emotional support was conjoined with the more practical provision of debt management guidance, parenting support classes, and advice on domesticity (housekeeping routines). In regards to debt management advice, all of the participants who were
positive about the FIP mentioned the utility of this form of support and several of them had received financial assistance in regards to the provision of leisure activities for their children, grants for school uniforms, and one household was waiting for an oven and the hiring of a garden skip to improve their current living arrangements. This positivity in regards to debt management and financial advice is perhaps unsurprising as it has been found that nearly a third of low income family households (with young children) are not accessing any of the available support services to which they are entitled (Aperia Limited 2010; Batty and Flint, 2012). The majority of the participants in my research made numerous references to their impoverished circumstances.

However, the raising of self-esteem and parenting confidence and the necessity to ‘set and enforce’ boundaries for their children was far more problematic for those experiencing forms of APVA. As noted in Chapter 6, some of the parent/s felt they were in hopeless, ‘no win’ situations in regards to being subjected to APVA, and some would even withhold telling their FIP key worker about abusive altercations within the home because of fear of further sanctions. According to Holt and Retford (2012: 372), this reluctance to divulge incidents of parental abuse has been acknowledged by practitioners already working with the issue of APVA, who have suggested this situation is exacerbated by a dearth of policy guidelines and because frontline services such as social services, YOTs, the police and the judiciary, and even domestic violence support services are all ill-equipped and unable to cope with the complexities inherent within the issue of parental abuse. Nonetheless, some practitioners have provided various recommendations to improve the current situation: the creation of specific shared policy guidelines for statutory and non-statutory agencies; earlier assessments and referrals; educational interventions through the ‘healthy relationships’ curriculum; a lead agency as point of contact for those experiencing parental abuse; measures to record the prevalence of APVA; the provision of legal remedies for children under eighteen beyond criminal justice sanctions; more research that examines the prevalence of APVA and effective interventions; and the mainstreaming of parenting support without stigmatising those on the receiving end of the interventions (ibid).

Interestingly, within the latest policy guidelines for social housing agencies, it has been acknowledged that APVA may initially come to their attention via noise-related ASB complaints from ‘disgruntled neighbours’, and that this necessitates being ‘managed delicately as the safety of the person experiencing abuse is paramount and needs to be managed effectively in order to
try and resolve the situation rather than the focus be on enforcement or punitive actions’ (Home Office, 2015: 19). Despite this caveat, for those with secure, assured or assured short hold tenancies, possession action and a hold on the tenancy remain the options of ‘last resort’ (ibid: 20). I unreservedly support the above recommendations especially in regards to the non-usage of enforcement actions such as the threat of, or actual eviction, especially for those subjected to APVA and/or families escaping from domestically violent relationships, or those with children with mental health issues. With regards to the provision of the lead agency recommendation however, this is extremely problematic because as we have seen in the case of FIP key workers remaining in this role is largely contingent upon specific familial factors and the other agencies involved (see Mandy above).

The efficacy of the above recommendations is yet to be evaluated, however, attempting to get those experiencing APVA to divulge further incidents is going to be particularly challenging for FIP key workers when families are already living under the threat of eviction and/or the prospect of losing their children to the care system. Even more disconcertingly, in my research the withholding of information in regards to ongoing incidents of APVA was also evident within the narratives of those who were coming to the end of a seemingly ‘successful’ intervention with the FIP, and no longer living under the threat of eviction. These parent/s may have established good relationships with their keyworkers, but the fear of further sanctions was still making them reluctant to divulge further incidents and overcoming this silence requires addressing by any multi-agency interventions aiming to curtail APVA. The following extract is Jess’ response to whether she informs her key worker about incidents of verbal abuse from her children:

No way, I keep it to myself. They (the children) have been in enough trouble and when I do parenting classes that should help. I have to learn to cope by myself and I will… (Interview 19, Jess).

As with the other parent/s subjected to child-parent abuse, Jess was adamant that she would not inform her key worker of further incidents and believes that attending parenting classes and family counselling will enable her to cope with the issue privately. The complex issue of APVA will be returned to in the concluding chapter of this thesis.
7.5 Teaching Mum to be Mum: The Provision of Parenting Classes

‘When I met those other kids, I just thought mine are not that bad’

It has been suggested that the situating of parental blame as the primary reason for young people offending has emanated from legal, political and psychological discourses for over a century (Holt, 2008). Moreover, contemporary formulations of problematic parents inherent within cultural and political discourses ‘are imbued with normative assumptions about gender and class, with poor White working-class mothers usually held up as the producers of youth crime’ (Holt, 2009: 90). So perhaps unsurprisingly, one of the most common and practical forms of familial support provided by the charity’s FIP are parenting training classes. Although parenting classes have received critical attention from those investigating Parenting Orders (POs) (see Walters and Woodward, 2007: Holt, 2008, 2009, 2010), there is no qualitative research to date that has directly examined them in relation to FIPs. This is perhaps surprising as these parenting training classes seemingly represent another exemplar or aspect of ‘moral tutelage’ (Wacquant, 2009; Gelsthorpe, 2010; Martin and Dennis, 2013). This sub-section of my final findings chapter will address these omissions.

Several of the lone female participants had already undertaken this form of parenting training and the rest were waiting to do so. Interestingly, it was only the female participants who mentioned attending or waiting to attend this aspect of the intervention. Essentially, there were two forms of parenting classes, one a Strengthening Families Course which was designed, implemented and delivered by the FIP, the other was the Triple P-Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P). In regards to the former Strengthening Families Course, this was based on the Triple P model and was primarily provided by the FIP on an ad hoc basis when there were delays in the provision and delivery of the Triple P programme. Both these forms of parenting training classes lasted for between six to eight weeks and, although non-compulsory, their successful completion was a part of the parent/s’ ‘action plans’ with the FIP (see Chapter 6). Only one parent refused to undertake the program and this was oldest participant who was interviewed (see Marion, Chapter 6); she framed her reluctance within the context of not requiring the classes because of years of experience raising children without such advice.
The Triple P ‘is one of the most widely disseminated “brands” of behaviour-based parenting training’ and is aimed at families experiencing behavioural and emotional problems and can be delivered on a group or one-to-one basis (McConnell, Breitkreuz and Savage, 2012: 43). According to Dermott and Pomati (2016: 128), the Triple P parenting programme is premised upon the ‘individualising of parenting’ (which negates structural factors such as poverty and social class) and involves ‘extensive reflection’ and the ‘cultivation of the “right” parenting practices’, and as such, is a philosophy that underpins the Troubled Families Programme (TFP). Moreover, within this philosophy ‘the government consciously conflates families who have troubles with families who cause trouble…reflecting the current political tendency to label the most disadvantaged in society as the cause of social harm’ (ibid: original emphasis; see also Levitas, 2012). It also has to be acknowledged that notions of poor parenting are also politically and socially constructed, and that parenting ‘training’ interventions are primarily targeting the poorest and most marginalised members of society (Gillies, 2005; Walters and Woodward, 2007).

The parent/s in my research who had completed the programme did so through attending group sessions with other families who were working with the charity. The primary purpose of the Triple P is to install confidence in parenting practices in relation to: discipline and boundary setting, conflict resolution, anger and mood management, stress-coping and co-parenting strategies, improving parent-child relationships and the overall reduction of children’s behavioural and emotional problems (Wiggins, Sofronoff and Sanders, 2009; Pickering and Sanders, 2015). These general improvements in parenting practices and child behaviour are based upon the assumption that ‘when parents are empowered with the tools for personal change they require to parent their children positively’ it benefits not only them and their offspring but also the whole community (Pickering and Sanders, 2015: 61). Although structural factors are omitted by proponents of the Triple P method (Dermott and Pomati, 2016) they do advocate the extension of the programme to the entire population and note the difficulties of engaging vulnerable parents:

53 The Triple P Programme is available in twenty-five countries (Dermott and Pomati, 2016) and there have been over 60 evaluations (see McConnell et al. 2010).
Parenting interventions need to be delivered in a non-stigmatising way. Currently parenting interventions are perceived by many vulnerable and at-risk parents as only being for inadequate, ignorant, failed or wayward parents. To be effective, a whole-of-population approach to parenting support has to emphasise the universal relevance of parenting assistance so that the larger community of parents embraces and supports parents being involved in parenting programs. (Pickering and Sanders, 2015: 59-60).

The use of derogatory terms like ‘inadequate, ignorant, failed or wayward parents’ seemingly reiterate wider ‘bad parent’ discourses and are employed to situate the utility of the programme for all parents. The lone-female participants who had already undertaken either form of parenting classes were rather ambivalent about this aspect of their FIP intervention. For instance, there was some positivity expressed in relation to having the opportunity to meet others facing similar circumstances and the chance to reflect upon their own parenting practices. However, for some, the classes were perceived as patronising and demeaning in regards to their parenting skills and some insisted the classes were not relevant for them but for ‘failing parents’. As such, the classes also provided them with the opportunity to make comparisons between their own and the other children in attendance. These comparisons would frequently entail them perceiving their children as less ‘anti-social’ or problematic and were also used to exemplify their own parenting proficiencies and the ineptitude of ‘bad parents’. As noted in Chapter 5, these practices of ‘reconstructing “bad parents” against which [other] parents can disidentify’ are also evident for those on the receiving end of Parenting Orders and compulsory parenting classes (Holt, 2009: 95). In my research these comparisons were also highly gendered and again predominantly focused on the lack of maternal respectability and responsibility:

We did the Strengthening Families course it was done here (the charity) and it lasted for six weeks. The kids went into one room and the parents in another, we watched DVDs about family conflict and stuff. When I met the other kids I just thought thank god my Jane (daughter) is not like that and as for the mums well you could tell they didn’t give a shit and let their kids run wild. I class myself as a good mum but you could see why some of the other mums were there, they were loud and swearing every other word and their kids were just as bad (Interview 2, Tracy).
This perceived lack of parental responsibility and respectability are situated by Tracy in relation to other mothers who don’t care enough and fail to supervise their children properly, and her insistence that she is a ‘good mum’ was similarly expressed by the other female participants who had undertaken this aspect of the intervention. Tracy was 35 years old and had recently completed her twelve month intervention with the FIP and was no longer living under the threat of eviction from her privately rented property for ASB, but was still facing the prospect of eviction for rent arrears. Tracy was the only participant residing in privately rented accommodation when she received the threat of eviction. The threat of eviction for ASB followed from complaints in regards to noise-related ASB and the verbal abuse of other residents by her partner Steve, a registered heroin addict who was currently serving a two year prison sentence for receiving stolen goods. Tracy (and Lucy, see Chapter 5) were the only participants being held accountable for the ASB of their partners. Tracy was now only living with her 11 year old daughter Jane, and there had been no complaints of ASB whatsoever since Steve’s incarceration. Tracy felt that being held accountable for her partner’s ASB was extremely unjust and regularly expressed how she felt she was a good mum and a ‘house proud’ tenant. Tracy was positive about the support she had received from her key worker (Paul) especially in regards to attending meetings with solicitors and court appearances and stated that without her key worker present she would have struggled with the associated legal jargon. As with the other parent/s who were positive about the FIP, Tracy expressed how she would miss the support Paul had given her but did not feel she needed his assistance anymore especially as the ASB allegations had ceased while her partner was in prison.

As with Tracy above, some of the female parent/s contrasted and distanced themselves (and their children) from households with mothers who were perceived as failing to control their children properly (see also Nixon and Parr, 2006; Holt, 2009, 2010). This contrasting and distancing was also evident for those being held accountable for their children’s ASB and was often also used to refute the severity and/or fairness of the allegations against them (see Chapter 5):

I have always tried to set boundaries with them (her children) you have to but you can’t keep them locked up all day not in a flat, not in the summer holidays. Of course there is going to be noise how can there not be, boys will be boys mine are
not that bad at all. But they would never dream of talking to me the way the kids in the parenting DVD did (Interview 16, Julie).

Julie’s insistence that she had attempted setting boundaries and her reluctance to keep her children indoors especially during the summer holidays is framed within the context of her children not behaving as badly as other children in the parenting class DVD. Her assertion that ‘boys will be boys’ was also similarly expressed by other female parent/s in a defensive attempt to play down the ASB their male children were committing. This again exemplifies the significance of the disciplinary role of gender and how the control of problematic male youth is predominantly bestowed upon female parent/s (Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Holt, 2008, 2009). Moreover, and in a similar vein to Holt’s (2009: 95) research into the recipients of POs, none of the lone female parents’ narratives mentioned the issue of the responsibility of the absent parent and would seemingly suggest they have adopted wider ‘self responsibilisation discourses’. As noted in Chapter 6 however, the lone-parent females who had escaped from domestically violent relationships and were now experiencing forms of APVA maintained that their children were essentially mimicking the detrimental behaviour of their former partners. Furthermore, these lone-female parents had made considerable efforts to escape these formerly violent relationships and for some this meant relocating their family, so they were well accustomed in having to take sole responsibility for their children.

7.6 The Participants’ Experiences of the FIP Continued

‘Knowing that they are getting paid to help you when they are sitting on their arse doing nothing.’

Taken as a thematic whole, those who were entirely negative about the FIP contextualised their discontent primarily in regards to the dearth of support they had received in alleviating their current circumstances, doubted that the FIP had any real powers to resolve their circumstances, and/or perceived their FIP key worker as just another unwanted multi-agency presence in their lives. This unwanted multi-agency presence was again situated within the context of the fatigue engendered through the laborious process of paperwork and associated forms of bureaucracy (see Chapter 5). Although only four of the parent/s were unequivocally critical of the FIP, some were also rather ambivalent and expressed both positive and negative experiences of the intervention.
For instance, some were positive about the FIP, but as previously noted were far less satisfied in regards to the temporal demands for behavioural improvements made by the other agencies involved. Interestingly of the four males interviewed, two were highly critical, and two were resoundingly positive about the FIP and their key worker. In regards to the dearth of support received from the FIP, this was primarily situated through references to financial and more practical assistance and the actual time spent with their key workers. For example, Grant (see Chapters 5 and 6) bemoaned the lack of support he and his then estranged partner had received:

She (the key worker) comes round to see us, she is meant to come round every day to help us with stuff but mostly only comes round once a week. Last Friday she was meant to come round and help but she was too busy. She says that she is here to help us help ourselves but what does that mean? I will tell you what she has done for us, she gave Sandra (partner) the phone yesterday to get a grant for the kids’ uniforms but the kids had already brought the form home…Knowing that they are getting paid to help you when they are sitting on their arse doing nothing. They are sitting on their arse doing fuck all. I can honestly say that she has done for us less than half a day’s work in three months, it’s pathetic. (Interview 11, Grant).

Grant, Sandra and their two children had recently been evicted from their council property because of disputed ASB complaints against their eldest son who was only an infrequent visitor to their property. Both Grant and Sandra were extremely negative about their key worker and the efforts of social workers and the other tutelary agencies more generally. However, as they were the only couple from outside of South City working with the FIP (see Chapter 5), it is doubtful that it would have been possible for them to be visited by their key worker on a daily basis because of the distance involved. Grant’s extract again reiterates the salience of the issue of empowerment through the key worker’s suggestion that she is primarily involved ‘to help us help ourselves’. However, Grant is unsure what this empowering discourse actually entails and he and Sandra insisted throughout their separate interviews that they had made considerable efforts to alleviate their current circumstances without the assistance of the FIP. These efforts largely entailed attempting to move out of the hostel that Sandra and the children were staying in and seeking accommodation in the private rented sector within close proximity of their children’s school.
In relation to the second aspect of discontentment with the FIP, this was expressed by parent/s in regards to the actual powers their key worker and the charity had for improving their current circumstances. As noted earlier in this chapter, several of the parent/s acknowledged that it was only the efforts of other agencies such as the ASBU and YOTs that could curtail their children’s ASB rather than the FIP. For Geoff (see Chapter 5), the FIP had no real powers to curtail his daughter’s behaviour and he was also no longer under the threat of eviction as no ASB had occurred in the vicinity of his property. However, Geoff, the oldest male parent interviewed, was still being held jointly responsible (with his ex-wife) for their daughter’s truancy and non-attendance at school, and the possibility of a £1000 fine and/or imprisonment if this situation was not rectified. The following extract is Geoff’s response to the positive aspects of the FIP from his second interview:

To be honest, I now consider it a complete waste of time and nothing positive has happened. Stacy (the daughter) is still not going to school and still getting in trouble. We have had them (the FIP) nearly a year and you wouldn’t mind if you could see something coming out of it. Donna (key worker) phoned up and said about another woman getting involved and coming to see me to help with parenting. But as far as I’m concerned I don’t need no help with parenting. I tell Stacy what to do and she does it or she doesn’t come near my house. Donna will just say that we all need to chat together but it’s all talk they don’t actually do anything. They haven’t got any powers to do anything. Donna comes to my house for an hour and talks and does forms but they are just writing things down nothing is being done. Nothing physically is being done so now another woman is coming along to fill in forms and tick boxes (Interview 18, Geoff).

From the outset of the extract and throughout both his interviews, Geoff bemoans the fact that his daughter is still causing trouble and not attending school despite nearly a year-long intervention with the FIP. As with the majority of the participants (regardless of whether they were positive or negative about the FIP), the prospect of yet another agency worker to ‘help with parenting’ is greeted with disdain. In the latter part of the extract Geoff seriously doubts whether the FIP has any real powers to rectify his current situation and, as with several of the participants, he reiterates the issue of multi-agency fatigue and the laborious process of paperwork. The amount of bureaucracy involved was often cited by the participants as the most
negative aspect of the intervention with the FIP, especially in regards to having to retell their familial circumstances to the numerous other agencies involved.

The issues of multi-agency fatigue and concerns over the actual powers the FIP possessed (in relation to the other agencies) was particularly evident within the narrative of the only participant who left the intervention with the FIP prematurely, without an exit plan. For Mandy (see Chapters 5 and 6), the impersonal nature of the bureaucracy involved was only exacerbating her family’s difficult circumstances. Although Mandy was positive about the efforts of her key worker in comparison to the negativity she expressed in relation to social workers (see earlier in this chapter), this did not prevent her from leaving the intervention. Mandy maintained throughout her interview that the vast amounts of bureaucracy involved cannot possibly encapsulate the complexities of her family’s problems. Mandy made references to how her family felt ‘lost in the middle of it all’ and had become ‘a thick file that nobody wants to deal with’ as opposed to a family trying hard to improve their current situation. Mandy and her children had escaped from her violent and controlling ex-partner (who denied them any social networks) and they were now struggling with the temporal demands for behavioural changes and the differing opinions from some of the other agencies. As with the other participants, these temporal demands and different opinions came primarily from social services, housing officials and educational professionals.

For Mandy, and several other participants, these differing opinions were particularly unhelpful for those encountering forms of APVA and as previously noted, made them particularly guarded and unwilling to divulge further incidents of parental abuse and/or further incidents of ASB to FIP key workers. As Morris (2013: 204) notes, following her research into how ‘troubled’ families negotiate multi-agency services, ‘families sought to withhold information about the acute problems they were experiencing, fearful of professional powers, yet, in so doing, continued the harmful environment that [they and their] children were living within’. This paradoxical situation has to be addressed by those working with ‘troubled’ families, however, in my research the participants readily acknowledged the necessity of ‘opening up’ through family counselling (from domestic violence professionals), but as with Mandy, some had been waiting over a year for this form of service provision to commence. According to Gani (2016), the long period of time involved in securing domestic violence counselling and services has been
attributed to the government’s austerity cuts (through reducing council budgets) and have facilitated the closure of 32 specialist services nationally. Moreover, these cuts in provision have engendered a situation in which one in three women get turned away from domestic violence refuges because of the lack of available spaces.

In regards to the powers the FIP actually possessed, Mandy was informed that the decision on whether or not she would be evicted from temporary accommodation was ultimately down to the council and not her FIP key worker or even social services. However, if she was evicted the ramifications for her and her family were extremely severe:

The council said that if we get kicked out because of our own fault they have no obligation to house me. All social services have said is that if it comes to that and I was technically homeless they would take the kids into protective care until I find somewhere else to live. Even though I’m pregnant I would have to go to a homeless shelter or something like that and then arrange somewhere new to live and then I would have to fight to get my kids back but because of the anti-social behaviour stuff it wouldn’t just be the case of finding somewhere to live it will be can I have my kids back please? I would have to prove all this is behind me and wasn’t going to happen again. So realistically you are talking anything up to year, so it’s catch 22 especially with council and I wouldn’t have any right to be housed down here. So I would have to find another town that was willing to rehouse me with enough rooms for the kids who weren’t even living with me. There is no way anybody is going to want to rehouse me with all this… (Interview 1, Mandy).

From the outset of the extract Mandy states the difficulties she will have getting rehoused if evicted and then comments on the devastating prospect of losing her children to the care system. As noted earlier in this chapter, those families who do not comply with the TFP risk becoming a ‘class of housing outcasts’ (Burney, 1999: 7; Hoffman, Mackie and Pritchard, 2010: 40) who relinquish their entitlements to social housing and move into the private rented sector. This seems a rather perverse outcome that could not only facilitate a situation in which ASB is just being displaced to another location, but as with Mandy, could leave them exposed to APVA without any statutory or non-statutory support. Moreover, the fact social services suspected inappropriate sexual behaviour (between Mandy’s current partner and her daughter) it is particularly disturbing that Mandy felt she had no other option than to leave South City and the FIP.
7.7 The Participants’ Recommendations

‘I would like someone to stop me ending up living on the street’

This sub-section of my final findings chapter will present the participants’ recommendations for improving and alleviating their current situations and as such will provide valuable insights for academics, policy makers, FIP practitioners and those on the receiving end of similar ASB interventions. The extracts that follow are the participants’ responses to questions in regards to preventative measures and their more general recommendations (see Interview Schedule in Appendix 2). The participants offered various and differing recommendations for improving their situations ranging from moving away from the problematic estates they inhabited, to naming the agencies they believed could have prevented and/or improved their current familial circumstances. These agencies were invariably social services, housing and education welfare professionals. Some of the participants offered recommendations directly related to their own personal circumstances, whereas others provided more general recommendations on a wider societal level, and some combined elements of both within their narratives. On a personal level, by far the most common of these recommendations were in relation to their own housing situations and not living under the threat of eviction, the relevant educational provision for their children, and for those positive about their key workers the necessity for earlier and more prolonged forms of intervention by the FIP. In regards to earlier intervention, one of the most unanimous of the recommendations presented was related to the issue of the FIP becoming involved prior to the eviction process to mediate with the neighbours who had initially made ASB allegations against them. This was of paramount importance to those who disputed the allegations of ASB and/or those who maintained they were the real victims (see Chapter 5). The participants suggested that if it was not possible for the FIP to mediate ASB allegations then it should have been undertaken by housing officials or neighbourhood wardens.

For those who forwarded more general recommendations these were often expressed in regards to wider societal concerns. For example, these were primarily situated with respect to improving the structural living conditions for the inhabitants of social housing estates through improved local amenities and employment opportunities. The youngest couple interviewed (see Carl and Lucy, Chapter 5), highlighted the necessity for more general support and bemoaned the dearth of children’s centres available. This is perhaps unsurprising as reductions in local authority
spending have facilitated the closure of over 400 hundred Sure Start centres nationwide (4Children, 2012). As the majority of the parent/s interviewed had older children their recommendations were expressed in relation to the lack of youth clubs and youth workers, and they blamed the demise of these services as explanatory reasons for young people ‘hanging around with nothing to do’ and ‘getting into trouble’ (see Chapter 5). As Arthur (2015: 456) notes, a report by UNISON (2014) recently found that reductions in local government funding to youth services of £60 million has facilitated the closure of 350 youth centres nationally and 2000 youth workers have been axed since 2012. For Arthur, these cuts perversely come at a time when the government is willing to invest £200 million in the TFP when these families only represent 1 per cent of the total families in the UK.

With regards to housing, as noted earlier in this chapter, even those who were positive about the FIP and close to ending their intervention remained uncertain as to whether or not they would be evicted and this was often cited as compounding their situations. As noted in Chapter 6, the threat of eviction could significantly intensify familial conflict and had detrimental consequences for all family members. For some of the participants with larger families, their current situations were directly related to overcrowding and a dearth of suitable housing options:

I do think that families like us, that suffer from things like this actually need a bigger place because you find that families that are cramped in a home that they shouldn’t be in are the ones who get in trouble because the neighbours are like well there are too many in there and they are making too much noise. How can you help it when you are cramped in a tiny little space well you can’t. I feel the council should take into consideration that these people who really do need better housing and not stick them in somewhere where they are going to be vulnerable to neighbours complaining. Not tell them like they did with me that it could take four years or more to get a place which is no good when you could get evicted by then (Interview 16, Julie).

The lack of appropriate housing was also contextualised in relation to wider social factors and the residualisation of the social housing sector, and the fact that local authorities had sold their housing stock to housing associations and other tenants through ‘right-to-buy’ schemes (see
Chapter 3). The following extract is Grant’s response to whether anything could be done for his family to improve their current circumstances:

The housing, the local authority doesn’t have any housing stock, why? Why because they have sold all there housing stock and kept nothing for themselves not even emergency housing. It’s all about the money and they accused us of anti-social behaviour when we haven’t even done it. They (the council) put all these things forward for why they took the house of us and it’s all crap, I reckon it was because of my reputation and rent arrears. If I could do one thing it would be to make a homeless unit in the area (Interview 11, Grant).

As previously noted (see Chapters 5 and 6), Grant and his family won their appeal against rent arrears and eventually moved into the private rented sector following eviction from their council property. Grant’s partner (Sandra) and their children were originally put into a temporary accommodation hostel whilst he stayed with relatives. Of the three households actually evicted from their properties all had rent arrears at the time of their evictions. This of course might be coincidental, as the majority of those involved in this research mentioned their impoverished circumstances, but several of those threatened with eviction also had rent arrears when they received the Notice of Seeking Possession (NOSP) for ASB. With regards to alleviating their poverty, some acknowledged the necessity of employment and were genuinely appreciative of their key workers’ efforts in helping them draft CVs and search for vacancies. This could perhaps be a reiteration of TFP discourses in relation to worklessness. However, employment was again perceived as problematic as they knew they had to be at home to curtail the ASB of their children. The issue of poverty will be returned to in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

Concerns about education loomed large in the participants’ recommendations, as both a precipitating factor for involvement in the eviction process and one that was also significantly compounding their current circumstances. The provision of the relevant education (increased school hours) was often cited as a factor that could significantly improve their present situations, especially by those with children with mental and behavioural problems. For example, making sure these children attended school was extremely problematic and could intensify familial conflict, and the possibility of further sanctions for truancy were expressed as particularly
distressing. In regards to being a precipitating factor in the eviction process, several of the participants suggested their children’s mental and behavioural problems commenced and were attenuated by being previously bullied and isolated from their peers in mainstream schools. For those with children identified as having special educational needs the limited number of hours they received, approximately one to two hours per week, meant that parent/s had considerable difficulties in preventing their ASB both within and/or outside the familial home. For Laura and Mark (see Chapter 6), the only participants who did not receive an eviction notice, but were referred to the FIP for being at future ‘risk’ of eviction, the issue of the relevant educational provision was of paramount importance:

He (the son) does an hour a day at a special school that deals with his behaviour and other issues and they are very supportive of him, but he doesn’t understand why it’s only an hour a day and gets frustrated when he is at home the rest of the day and that’s when his behaviour goes downhill. At his old school he got bullied and kicked off so he was only getting two hours a day and had one-to-one lessons in the library. This made him become isolated. He literally has just two kids he gets on with now and one of them is from his old school. So he hasn’t learned to meet anybody new so the problem is contained, but he is never going to get any better because he is not learning how to get on with people. So when the neighbours confront him he just doesn’t know how to deal with it (Interview 13, Laura).

Laura was very appreciative of the education her son was now receiving in his current school, but notes how attending for only an hour a day was frustrating for her son and denied him the opportunity to develop his social skills. As with Laura, several of the participants maintained that their children’s behaviour initially descended after incidents of bullying at mainstream schools and some cited it as a reason for their current truancy. The issue of truancy has particular salience, as it is inextricably linked to offending and anti-social behaviour (see Graham and Bowling, 1995; Hales et al., 2009: Casey, 2012). Moreover, this linkage between truancy and ASB is not ‘necessarily unidirectional’ despite the current government’s insistence that it is a ‘causal relationship whilst simultaneously disaggregating the effects of structural factors such as poverty’ (Arthur, 2015: 446). The issue of failing schools also requires far more academic consideration.
For reasons of anonymity, it will not be possible to correctly reference the sources of information regarding ‘failing’ schools and secondary education in South City. However, according to South City council’s *Effective Learning for Every Pupil Strategy, 2012-2015*, of the ten secondary schools in the city, only one reached the national target for GCSE attainment in 2012, and 38.6 per cent of secondary school pupils in the city failed to get A-C grades in English and 49.6 per cent failed to achieve the same grades in Maths. Moreover, one in five children under the age of seven had fallen below expected reading levels and 7.3 percent of young people (aged 16-19) were not in education, employment or training (NEET). In regards to vulnerable children, those in care, or with special needs, and white British pupils receiving free school meals, 45.2 per cent failed to achieve 5 GCSEs at the grades of A-C. With regards to exclusion rates, South City had the fourth largest number in England (2011-2012) with 1660 pupils temporarily excluded, this equates to 7.05 per cent of South City’s total school population. The pertinent issue of inadequate educational provision has been noted in policy literature on ‘troubled’ families, but again is located as the corollary of failing parent/s and their problematic children, rather than the ineptitude of the education system:

Many members of families did not complete school or attend it regularly - often a trait that seemed to pass to pass from parent to child… Parents described their children being sent to sit in corridors, or on lunchtime exclusion and permanent exclusion where they are free to wander around the streets…in many cases they end up in a pupil referral unit, being home tutored, or not in education at all. *What was remarkable was how little most children attended any learning institution at all after they were excluded from secondary school. A few hours a week was all that was expected of them…It is an irony that some children did not want to be in school, and that the way to stop being in school is to misbehave – which the children did almost effortlessly…* (Casey, 2012: 59-60 emphasis added).

This passage vividly demonstrates how educational failure is again spuriously perceived as being transmitted from one generation to the next. The dearth of educational provision for those children excluded from school and/or the minimal amounts of schooling for those with behavioural problems are duly noted. However, there is no acknowledgement that their misbehaviour could be attributed to the mental health difficulties some suffered from as the onus is put solely on children not wanting to attend school. The *Association for Young People’s*
Health suggest that 13 per cent of boys and 10 per cent of girls (aged 11-15) suffer from and have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder, however, only a quarter of these have access to the services they require (Hagell et al., 2013). It has also been noted that over the past five years there has been a 58 per cent increase in the number of school-aged children with speech, language and communication needs, however, this increase has coincided with drastic cuts to specialist advisory teaching services (Gross, 2011). These cuts in state funding are ‘highly class-specific’ because wealthier parent/s can utilise their resources to improve the outcomes for their children, whereas poorer members of society struggle without support and are essentially being ‘repossibilized and penalized’ (Arthur, 2015: 456, emphasis added).

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter commenced noting that considering FIPs as inherently ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is too simplistic as the delivery of this form of intervention is dependent upon local variations (Parr, 2011). Nonetheless, the experiences and opinions of those families on the receiving end of the TFP have been largely absent. As with the preceding findings chapters, the overarching aim of this chapter was address this lacuna through discussing the experiences and opinions of those involved in the eviction process and a local FIP. Moreover, the government’s insistence that the lives of ‘troubled’ families have been ‘turned around’ (DCLG, 2015) is extremely doubtful and, as this thesis has noted throughout, it might be more apposite to consider those subjected to this form of familial intervention as having their lives completely ‘turned upside down’. This chapter continued by noting the generic commonalities of FIPs and presented what are considered as the primary indicators of ‘successful’ outcomes. However, it was noted that for those suffering from APVA and/or who had escaped from domestic violence, or had children with mental health difficulties, long-term and sustainable support was required beyond the resources and temporal remits of the FIP. With regards to APVA, those exposed to this form of domestic violence were extremely reluctant to inform their key workers of further incidents of abuse because of fear of further sanctions. Disconcertingly, this reluctance to report APVA was not only evident for those commencing their intervention with the FIP, but also from those who were no longer living under the threat of eviction and were positive about the FIP.

This chapter then considered the parent/s’ experiences of their key workers and for those positive about the FIP, their mediation and advocacy roles with the other tutelary agencies were greatly
appreciated. However, despite behavioural improvements, the temporal demands from the other agencies were often compounding their circumstances, and some were daunted at the prospect of no longer having their key worker for support. A factor not noted in previous research was that several reported that they and their children had become attached to their key worker. This chapter then discussed the complex issue of empowerment and how for some their key worker had been instrumental in raising their parenting confidence and self-esteem; however, this was far more problematic for those subjected to APVA. Far from being ‘feckless’ parent/s the majority reported the necessity to improve their parenting practices and being able to cope without the FIP or the other agencies. The issue of multi-agency fatigue was again reiterated (see Chapters 5 and 6) and related to the laborious levels of paperwork and having to retell their familial histories to the numerous other agencies involved. A further lack of academic scrutiny is evident in relation to the provision of parenting ‘training’ aspect of FIPs. This chapter addressed this impasse by presenting the parent/s’ experiences of parenting classes. Although some were positive about the opportunity it gave to reflect on their own parenting practices and to meet other parent/s in similar circumstances, others insisted they found them rather condescending and more relevant to ‘non-respectable’ mothers and their children, as opposed to themselves.

The opinions of those resoundingly negative about the FIP were then introduced and were largely related to the lack of support received and doubting that the FIP had any actual powers to alleviate their current predicaments. This is a particularly salient point, as even those who were positive about the FIP acknowledged that their situations were only ultimately improved through the efforts of other agencies, such as the ASBU, YOTs, housing officials and social services. For those experiencing APVA, and/or had escaped from domestically violent relationships the necessity of forms of family counselling were deemed as desperately required, but because of cuts to funding some had been waiting for over year for these services. The shortage of available specialist support services from a variety of agencies were again reiterated in the participants’ recommendations.

The participants offered various recommendations on both a private and a public level. The most unanimous of these recommendations were in relation to improving their housing situations (and not living under the threat of eviction), the necessity for better educational provision, and the need for mediation prior to the eviction process. With regards to housing, these were situated
within the context of the deleterious consequences of living under the threat of eviction or actually being evicted (see Chapter 6). On a wider societal level, the issue of inadequate housing options was related by some to the residualisation of the social housing sector and a lack of suitable accommodation for larger families. Some of the participants were acutely aware that funding cuts to support services were compounding not only their situations but also intensified the problems faced by the inhabitants of social housing more generally, and the scarcity of local amenities and/or job opportunities were often cited. All of the themes noted above, will be further elaborated upon in the concluding chapter of this thesis.
CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This concluding chapter will draw together and discuss the main themes elucidated from this interpretive research. Firstly, the chapter will commence with a brief overview of the literature review chapters that considered the historical provision and management of social housing in the UK, through to the TFP agenda in the contemporary era. This initial focus will reiterate how socio-political perceptions of council tenants have changed since its inception and how housing problems, like social problems more generally, have engendered a raft of policy interventions. As such, this initial discussion will argue that although contemporary housing interventions to alleviate ASB do not constitute a significant rupture from the historical role housing has played in the governance of conduct, there are also important discontinuities. Secondly, the discussion will then continue by presenting an overview of the main findings of this research in regards to the participants’ experiences of a local FIP and how they mediated the familial consequences of the eviction process. A summary of the participants’ recommendations for alleviating their ‘troubled’ family status and my overall arguments will also be presented. These findings will be discussed within the context of contemporary policy and academic literature relating to ‘troubled’ families, and will discuss both the limitations of my research and recommend further lines of enquiry. As such, this discussion chapter will extend and enhance scholastic and policy commentaries on the phenomenon of ASB and the TFP, whilst simultaneously critiquing neoliberal forms of familial intervention and residualised welfare provision.

8.2 The Continuities and Discontinuities of Socially Constructed Housing Problems

The most pronounced of the historical continuities is that the provision and management of social housing will always entail aspects of social control, moral regulation and training (Ravetz, 2001; Carr et al. 2007; inter alia), because it is the housing tenure that will always be inextricably linked to wider debates over poverty, welfare and criminality (Flint, 2006). As such,
it could be more apposite to consider this form of housing tenure as ‘welfare housing for problem populations’ (Squires, 2013: 220). As Jacobs et al., (2003) insightfully contend, housing problems in common with social problems more generally, essentially come and go, rise to the top of the policy agenda and then recede, can remain dormant then erupt again, can be rediscovered in the future as neglected issues, and have engendered a multitude of policy interventions. In order to situate these numerous socially constructed housing problems, Chapter Two commenced with a consideration of available forms of working-class accommodation and the deleterious living conditions of the urban poor prior to state intervention in the nineteenth century, through to the mass provision of municipal housing in the twentieth century and beyond. Victorian concerns and subsequent legislation were not just predicated upon the necessity to improve the living conditions of the urban poor by eradicating physical diseases, but also concerns over the criminogenic dispositions of the ‘dangerous classes’ (Jones, 1975; Carr, 2007). Similarly to the ‘troubled’ families of the contemporary era, the inhabitants of slums were deemed as being responsible for their own impoverishment and their anti-social proclivities were regarded as being generationally transmitted through inadequate parenting and other behavioural deficits. A further similarity with contemporary ASB housing sanctions, is that these Victorian perceptions were highly gendered as females were held not only responsible for the socialisation of children and the upkeep of the home (Donzelot, 1980; Carr, 2007), but also the respectability, behaviour and morality of other members of their household (Hunt, 1999).

By the 1960s, the growing realisation that impoverished council estates were similarly criminogenic meant that housing managers were now focusing on whole estates rather than the ‘problem tenant’ of previous eras (Ravetz, 2001; Card, 2006). However, the housing of these more problematic populations changed the social composition of council estates through the divisive allocation practices of local authority housing managers (Murie, 1997; Brown, 2004). The social control function of housing management although evident since the inception of municipal housing intensified and divisive allocation practices reinforced the historically enduring distinction between the ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ inhabitants of social housing estates. This enduring notion of respectability is also prevalent amongst council tenants themselves and is still being employed to distantiate between the ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ families that remain in the residualised social housing sector (McKenzie, 2015). The 1960s also witnessed the gradual rise of housing associations who similarly formalised the ‘deserving’ and ‘underserving’ poor
dichotomy through allocation practices and tenancy agreements (McDermont, 2004). Nonetheless, it was the 1980s and the ascendancy of the New Right that introduced some of the most profound changes within the social housing sector (Cole and Furbey, 1994).

It was the older, ‘respectable’ tenants that primarily benefited from the ‘right to buy’ initiatives of the 1980s and beyond, whereas those unable to partake in homeownership were left within an increasingly residualised public housing sector (Ravetz, 2001). The 1980 Housing Act gave social housing tenants the security of tenure right which granted them the same legal protection as private renters, however, this also significantly reduced the previous powers local authorities possessed for evicting problematic households (Burney, 1999). As Flint (2006) notes, the Conservative’s and then New Labour’s emphasis upon the accountability of social housing providers and the concomitant focus upon tenants’ empowerment through rights and responsibilities represent the most striking discontinuity within the governance of conduct through housing interventions. Prior to the late 1970s local authorities exercised ‘complete autonomy’ in the management of social housing tenants (Card, 2006: 51). As Card further notes however, from the late 1980s onwards the problematic tenants left behind in the residualised social housing sector became considered as formative members of a culturally distinct and ‘morally suspect’ ‘underclass’, responsible for the anti-social and criminal behaviour inherent with Britain’s impoverished social housing estates (ibid: 52-53). The 1996 Housing Act returned to landlords the eviction powers that were restricted by the security of tenure measures introduced in the 1980s, and the use of introductory/probationary tenancies inserted ‘behavioural regulations into the core of the tenancy agreement’ (Crawford, 2009: 824). As such, tenancy agreements are imbued with discourses of social control that aim to ‘balance’ communities through promulgating morally acceptable standards of behaviour (Haworth and Manzi, 1999).

The election of the New Labour government in 1997 intensified the emphasis upon the behavioural control and empowerment of council tenants and a multitude of legislation was introduced to alleviate social exclusion and ASB (Haworth and Manzi, 1999; Burney, 2005). During this period the privatisation process proliferated and housing associations became significant providers of accommodation in the residualised social housing sector (Ginsburg, 2005). The policy initiatives to combat ASB and social exclusion were situated within the context of New Labour’s Respect Agenda and represented the latest manifestation of
‘respectable’ fears over ‘problem’ families and inadequate working-class parenting practices (Pearson, 1983, 2009). Essentially, the residualised social housing sector became the ‘test bed’ for ASB interventions and ‘social policy turned further into anti-social behaviour management and public policy became a form of criminalising pest control’ (Squires, 2013: 220). In a similar fashion, current governmental discourses and policy interventions now aimed at those considered as ‘troubled’ families, negate structural factors such as poverty, which has intensified through the neoliberal retrenchment of welfare provision. In summary, and as this thesis has noted, the inhabitants of social housing ‘have in turn been seen as returning war heroes, the respectable working classes, morally suspect ex-slum dwellers, citizens with a right to a decent home, and over recent times either members of an “underclass” or the socially excluded’ (Card, 2006: 53) and now represent a vivid exemplar of the ‘precariat’ (Squires and Lea, 2013).

As this thesis has also noted, the dual themes of ‘respectability’ and the ‘critical disciplinary role of gender’ are intimately entwined and reverberate throughout the history of social housing. The latter issue of gender and disciplinary control through parenting is particularly evident within ‘underclass’ discourses, and currently reiterated within the government’s ‘troubled’ families agenda (see Casey, 2012), and political responses to the 2011 riots (see Cameron, 2011b, 2011c). It has been suggested that Wacquant’s (2008) conceptualisations of ‘advanced marginality’ (as the corollary of the neoliberal retrenchment of welfare) provide a valuable resource for challenging the dominant media, political and academic discourses of the ‘underclass’ (Hancock and Mooney, 2013). As this thesis has noted throughout however, lone-parent females remain the privileged targets of neoliberal familial interventions (Wacquant, 2009; Martin and Wilcox, 2013). Disconcertingly, poor white, lone female parents remain the primary recipients of ASB housing sanctions (Hunter and Nixon, 2001; Nixon and Hunter, 2009) and are still being held responsible for the behaviour of other members (mostly male) of the household (see Chapters 6 and 7). This thesis not only addressed the considerable gaps in the existing ASB literature, but has also enhanced and significantly extended the concept of the critical disciplinary role of gender. In particular, it has not only examined its enduring relevance for holding females accountable for the behaviour of males, but has also been employed and extended to reveal how some adamantly refused to adopt the disciplinarian and often violent practices of former partners to curtail their children’s ASB. This gendered concept was also further enhanced by noting that some of the primarily male children were also copying these
disciplinarian practices and were subjecting their mothers to forms of APVA, in their attempts to control the household, and as such represents one of the most significant and original findings of this interpretive research. This concluding chapter will now revisit and summarise the parent/s’ experiences of how they mediated the familial consequences of the eviction process and situate these within the context of relevant contemporary literature and wider theoretical discourses.

8.3 Actually Listening to ‘Troubled’ Families!

The primary purpose of this interpretive research was to give ‘troubled’ families (working with a local FIP) a much needed voice through empirically examining their perceptions, relationships, interactions, and the contexts of the ASB housing sanctions to which they are subjected, and address and enhance existing TFP literature. As such, the first of my findings chapters commenced by contextualising the parent/s’ perceptions of their statutory and non-statutory interactions prior to the eviction process commencing. These relationships and interactions with various tutelary agencies exemplified their previous and enduring vulnerability; the salience and prevalence of mental health issues; multi-agency fatigue and feelings of resentment and frustration at being silenced within these and their subsequent interactions with the numerous agencies involved. With regards to mental health, Chapter 5 graphically illustrated how some frantically attempted to curb their children’s ASB and appease the temporal demands for behavioural change from the tutelary agencies involved, whilst suffering from long-term depression themselves. Those with children also suffering from suspected or previously diagnosed mental health problems encountered a complete dearth of adequate provision and some had waited over a year for an assessment. This lack of adequate mental health provision is perhaps unsurprising as the contemporary government is acutely aware of the problems faced by young people in attaining mental health services (HoCHC, 2014). As far as multi-agency fatigue is concerned this involved having to retell their familial narratives to the various tutelary agencies and the laborious process of paperwork. Despite feelings of resentment and frustration some had paradoxical relationships with the agencies involved, in which the necessity for more support was conjoined with the desire to manage without any further interventions.

Chapter 5 continued by addressing the fact that there is a distinct lack of qualitative research into the specific problems that prompt social landlords to invoke their ASB powers (Hunter et al., 2007a). This lacuna was addressed through the participants’ perceptions of the actual events that
precipitated their household becoming involved in the eviction process, and revealed how some were both the perpetrators and victims of ASB. This consideration of the victim half of the ASB phenomenon exemplified how some suffered from ongoing parental abuse, and reiterated the silence of being deemed the anti-social ‘other’ especially when counter claims of ASB were made. The detrimental consequences of intra-communal bullying and lifestyle clashes and were situated through pervasive ‘notions of respectability’ (Webster, 2008: 304) and used to make comparisons with, and to distance themselves from those considered as more ‘anti-social’ families. This ongoing dichotomy between the ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ inhabitants of social housing has continued unabated (McKenzie, 2015), and was employed by the female participants in my research to distance themselves from those they considered as maternally non-respectable ‘bad mothers’, and refute the severity of the ASB allegations against their household. For Wacquant (2008: 184), this distancing between the impoverished ‘precariat’ is the consequence of the ‘desolidarizing effects of territorial stigmatisation’ and a corollary of neoliberal anti-welfarist policies.

The events that precipitated the eviction process were situated in relation to neighbour disputes and more neighbourhood and crime problems. These neighbour disputes were engendered through inadequate housing (lack of space and poor sound proofing) and due to close proximity, created tension and conflict with older, more established residents. These relatively minor disputes (sometimes with former friends), could often escalate into more serious altercations. With regards to neighbourhood and crime problems more generally this entailed lone female participants not only being held responsible for the ASB of their children, but also being held responsible for the ASB of large numbers of youths causing disturbances at their properties. As such, this thesis also examined and significantly extended conceptualisations of the critical disciplinary role of gender with a detailed comprehension of the intersectionality between the dynamics of gender, class, ethnicity, and disability. As noted in Chapter 5, the impoverished and marginalised estates the participants inhabited had gangs of NEET youths causing ASB, and as noted in other research, illicit drugs, gang violence and crime, fear and desperate frustration, engender a state of constant instability for the inhabitants of social housing (McKenzie, 2015).

In Chapter 6, the *habitus* of instability (Barker, 2016) was extended to encapsulate how the parent/s shared within their narratives feelings of uncertainty and angst not only in relation to the
prospect of eviction and the possibility of losing children to the care system, but also in regards to their inter-personal relationships and wider social networks. The salience of the dual themes of ‘non-respectability’ and the critical disciplinary role of gender were also reiterated in a detailed consideration of the familial consequences of the eviction process. With regards to ‘non-respectability’ the female participants again situated their various attempts at curtailing their children’s (and others) ASB through comparisons and distinctions from other ‘bad’ mothers devoid of ‘respectability’. Moreover, any negative insinuations upon their own housekeeping practices were further situated as signs of ‘non-respectability’ and perceived as a particularly belittling part of the intervention by female participants. As noted above, the concept of the critical disciplinary role of gender was also further developed and enhanced to exemplify how the women who had escaped from domestically violent relationships were adamant that they would not resort to the violent and draconian disciplinary practices of their former partners to control their children, despite being subjected to forms of APVA. This chapter also enhanced contemporary policy and academic literature through illustrating the adverse effects the eviction process had for other members of the household and again refuted TFP discourses that perceive the siblings of ‘anti-social’ children as similarly problematic (see Casey, 2012). For instance, some of the innocent siblings of those committing ASB not only had to contend with the prospect of homelessness and/or the care system, but also the detrimental consequences of having to move schools and losing their friends and social networks. Those who had children committing ASB were also subjected to various forms of tutelary surveillance to the detriment of their inter-personal relations and wider social networks and some felt it was impossible for them to have intimate adult relationships. This surveillance exemplifies how those involved with the TFP, and the other tutelary agencies, continually experience forms of ‘social panopticism’ (Wacquant, 2001) and how FIPs personify the latest manifestation of ‘moral tutelage’ (Wacquant, 2009; Gelsthorpe, 2010; Martin and Wilcox, 2013) for poor working-class families.

Chapter 7 commenced by noting that the implementation and delivery of FIPs are dependent upon local variations so to perceive them as inherently ‘good’ or ‘bad’ is too simplistic (Parr, 2011). However, despite this intuitive acknowledgement, and as with the preceding findings chapters, my overarching intention was to give those involved with a local FIP a much needed voice. The primary indicators of what are conceived as ‘successful’ outcomes were then noted through the generic commonalities of FIPs. However, for those suffering from APVA, and/or
had escaped violent relationships, or had children with mental health issues, the necessity for sustainable support beyond the resources and temporal remits of the FIP seriously refutes the government’s insistence that many ‘troubled’ families have had their lives ‘turned around’ (DCLG, 2015). As the findings chapters of this thesis have noted throughout, in many respects it is far more apposite to consider those involved with the TFP as having their lives turned completely upside down. Moreover, the fact that ‘successful’ outcomes (and exiting the intervention) are predicated upon those involved being essentially reassigned back to some of the multi-agencies they have previously encountered seemingly suggests that all the FIPs are ultimately providing is a form of temporary support and mediatary respite from the demands of the other tutelary agencies. This rather circular form of outcome is also evident within the utilisation of the threat of eviction to initially secure compliance with the TFP, as the subsequent stabilising of tenancies is then considered a ‘successful’ outcome of the intervention. However, as noted in this research, even those coming to the end of a ‘successful’ intervention were still unsure over their housing situations and were also acutely aware that their current predicaments were only ultimately improved through the efforts of other agencies such as the police, ASBU, YOTs, housing officials and social services.

For those positive about the FIP it was their key worker’s advocacy and mediatory roles with the other tutelary agencies that were most appreciated. However, the temporal demands for behavioural improvements from the other agencies were often cited as compounding their current situations, and some were daunted at the prospect of no longer having their key worker for support. The pertinent issues of dependency and attachment have not been examined within academic or policy literature so this thesis has contributed to addressing this imbalance. The complex issue of empowerment was examined and those positive about the FIP suggested their key worker had been instrumental in improving their self-esteem and parenting practices. However, whether this sense of empowerment will continue after the FIP intervention (and without their key worker present), when the parent/s are reassigned back to the agencies they previously had problematic relationships with (see Chapter 5) requires further academic scrutiny, beyond the temporal constraints of my research. This also perhaps exemplifies the limitations of mine and others’ qualitative research into the TFP, for instance, all that can be achieved is an interpretive snapshot into the experiences of those facing such sanctions as forms of statutory and non-statutory interventions are seemingly enduring for these marginalised populations.
Moreover, within government literature that has allegedly listened to ‘troubled’ families (see Casey, 2012: 60) the longevity of familial interventions is strikingly evident as those interviewed in 2012 were originally sourced from FIPs implemented in 2006.

For those experiencing forms of APVA the raising of self-esteem and the improvement of parenting practices was far more difficult. In a limited form of resistance those encountering this form of domestic violence were extremely reluctant to inform their key worker of further incidents because of fear of further sanctions. This again suggests that using the sanction of eviction to secure and maintain compliance to the TFP has perverse consequences for those working with the TFP and experiencing APVA. As far as avenues for further research are concerned, there is undoubtedly a need for interpretive research into those who refuse to comply with the TFP and instead move into the private rented sector and perhaps displace their ASB. There is also the necessity for more academic research into the parenting training aspect of FIPs and the provision of parenting classes. As noted in Chapter 7, I was only able to ask female participants about their experiences of this aspect of the intervention as no males had undertaken this part of the intervention during my fieldwork. It would be interesting to see if males conceived this facet of the intervention as condescending and not relevant to them as the females did in my research (see Chapter 7).

The reluctance to inform FIP staff of further incidents of ASB and/or APVA not only compounded the situations of those commencing their intervention with the FIP, but was also disconcertingly evident within the narratives of those coming to the end of their intervention and no longer involved in the eviction process. Far from being feckless parents, those experiencing APVA were desperately seeking family counselling but as with those with children with mental health problems, severe cuts to funding meant that some had been waiting over a year for these services. For those resoundingly negative about the FIP discontent was expressed through doubting the powers the FIP actually possessed for alleviating their circumstances, and a perceived lack of general support from their key worker.

The participants provided various recommendations to improve their current circumstances on both a private and public level. By far the most unanimous of these on a personal level were in regards to improving their current housing situations and not living under the detrimental prospect of eviction, the necessity for improved educational provision, and mediation with
neighbours prior to the eviction process commencing. As contended in Chapter 7, the threat of eviction for those escaping domestic violence and/or currently experiencing APVA, or those with children suffering from mental health issues, only adds to the instability of their precarious lives. With regards to wider societal concerns, the parent/s were cognisant of the non-availability of suitable housing options that has been engendered through the ongoing residualisation of the social housing sector. Some of the participants also cited the issue of the scarcity of local amenities, support services, and employment opportunities for the young as significant factors and as such represented exemplars of their ongoing and advanced marginality (Wacquant, 2008).

In summary, the primary impetus for this interpretive thesis was to give those on the receiving end of the eviction process and the TFP more generally, a much needed voice by eliciting their experiences of the interventions to which they are subjected. As Butler (2014) forcibly contends, the TFP has undoubtedly contributed to the spurious notion that there exists a class of person, who through their own moral ineptitude and behavioural deficits, deserve to be punished or have their lives ‘turned around’. Furthermore, as he suggests, it is not a question of what has been done for these families, it is the negative perceptions of these ‘troubled’ families that ultimately matters and requires challenging. As regards the utility of this and other forms of class-based familial intervention, as Stanley Cohen’s prescient theorizing noted in Visions of Social Control (1985: 264):

The choice here is between two quite different political options. One would be the strategic use of social-control resources as an opportunity for welfare improvement…The alternative would be to divert scarce resources right away from the system and devote them to policies (family, educational, community, health, fiscal etc.) which are not justified in control terms at all…

Unfortunately, the first of Cohen’s political options has been succeeded by concerted neoliberal policies and rhetoric that aim to punish the poor for structural factors beyond their control. However, I would undoubtedly reiterate the necessity of his second option, and as such would only support policies based upon alleviating poverty and not those predicated upon the social control and coercion of these marginalised sections of the population, currently labelled as ‘troubled’ families.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Participants’ Profiles

Interview 1: Mandy

Mandy was 32 years old, white British and on benefits and had four children under the age of sixteen, but at the time of the interview was pregnant and expecting her fifth child. Mandy and her family had been threatened with eviction from temporary accommodation provided by the council and had previously been evicted from a domestic violence refuge because of her children’s misbehaviour. Mandy and her children moved to South City to escape her former partner’s controlling and violent behaviour from a city approximately 20 miles away. At the time of her interview, Mandy was experiencing APVA from her eldest son who she suspected had ADHD. Moreover, Mandy left the intervention with the FIP after three months and moved her family to the north of England with her current partner without an exit plan. Mandy also reported suffering from depressive episodes and had social workers, mental health professionals and health visitors involved prior to receiving the threat of eviction.

Interview 2: Tracy

Tracy was 33 years old, white British and on benefits and had one eleven year old daughter. Tracy was the only participant living in the private rented sector at the time of receiving an eviction notice and had lived in this property for three years. There were no allegations of ASB against either Tracy or her daughter so she was living under the threat of eviction because of the behaviour of her partner, Steve. Steve was a registered heroin addict and currently in prison because of receiving stolen goods. There had been no complaints of ASB since Steve had been incarcerated. The ASB complaints came from neighbours who said he had often verbally abused them after asking them for money. Tracy insisted that she had often been verbally abused by these neighbours and at the time of her interview was coming to the end of a year-long intervention with the FIP. As no ASB occurred whilst Steve was in prison, Tracy was no longer
living under the threat of eviction for ASB, however, her private landlord still wanted her evicted for rent arrears. The only agency that Tracy had been involved with prior to the eviction process were social services.

Interview 3: Paula

Paula was a 28 years old lone-parent, white British and on benefits and had a ten year old son, who was recently diagnosed with ADHD. Paula had been working with the FIP for nearly a year and this was ongoing because the council had demoted her tenancy and wanted her evicted because of noise-related ASB from her son. These noise complaints came from elderly neighbours which Paula suggested was because her son would shout and swear at her. Paula insisted that she had lost several friends because she could no longer had them visiting her property and that she and her son had now become the victims of ASB from these former associates. Paula wanted to be moved into supported housing away from these former friends and reported being a long term sufferer of depression. Prior to the threat of eviction, Paula was involved with social workers, health visitors, mental health agencies and SENCO.

Interviews 4 and 15: Kerry

Kerry was a 34 year old lone-parent, white British and on benefits and a long term sufferer of depression. At the time of her first interview, Kerry was three months into her intervention and living in temporary accommodation provided by the charity with her two sons aged 14 and 16. Kerry was the first person in South City evicted because of the ASB of her children and this attracted considerable local media coverage and she appeared on the front page of a local newspaper. This eviction followed from various youths congregating at her property and having all night parities and the criminality of her children. Kerry and her sons were also evicted from a temporary accommodation hostel because of their ASB. I decided to re-interview Kerry six months later because of these dual evictions. By the time of her second interview, Kerry’s 14 year old daughter was also living with her in a two bedroom property that was provided by the council but managed by the charity through a Family Intervention Tenancy (FIT). This essentially meant that Kerry was on a probationary period for two years and had to prove herself worthy of getting a full council tenancy but could be instantly evicted if further incidents of ASB occurred. Kerry was also getting regularly verbally abused by her male children when she
attempted to set boundaries or tried to prevent them staying out. Kerry suspected her eldest son had mental health issues and had been waiting over a year for an anger management course for him. Kerry and her children had been involved with the police, social workers, and YOTs prior to her first eviction.

Interview 5: Liz

Liz was a 40 year old lone-parent, white British and on benefits, suffering from depression and also had rent arrears. Liz had two sons aged 13 and 15 and had been threatened with eviction because of the ASB of her eldest child. This ASB involved him and his gang committing vandalism, smoking drugs, urinating in the shared passageway and verbally abusing other residents. Liz had been living in her council property for seven years and the father of her children had left four years earlier because of domestic violence against her and the children. Liz’s eldest son was regularly abusing her and his younger brother and this could end in violent altercations. Liz was coming to the end of a one year intervention with the FIP and insisted her current situation would only be alleviated if her eldest son was placed into the care system. Liz also believed her eldest son had mental health issues from smoking cannabis from a young age. Liz and her children had been involved with the police, YOTs and social services prior to receiving an eviction notice.

Interview 6: Sally

Sally was a 40 year old lone-parent, white British, and living on benefits with her 10 year old son. Sally was threatened with eviction from a council flat for running a brothel and because of noise related ASB complaints against her son. Sally avoided eviction by moving into a privately rented house and at the time of her interview was coming to the end of a one year intervention with the FIP. Sally had lived in South City for four years and had lived in a B&B for a year and a half prior to living in her council flat and her son had been in and out of the care system. Sally also maintained that she and her son were the victims of ASB by local residents. Sally and her son had been involved with social services, the police, health visitors and mental health agencies prior to being threatened with eviction.
Interviews 7 and 17: Marion

Marion was a white British lone-parent, and at 57 years old the eldest participant interviewed. Marion had 5 children but only 2 of these lived at home, a 14 year old daughter and a 17 year old son. Marion worked part-time and was on housing benefit, had rent arrears and had lived at her council property for twenty years. Marion was threatened with eviction because of the ASB of her daughter, Stacy. Marion was also regularly being verbally abused and even blackmailed for consumer items by Stacy, and had been working with the FIP for nearly a year when I interviewed her for a second time. At the time of her first interview, Marion was being jointly held responsible for Stacy’s ASB with her former husband Geoff (see below). However, at the time of her second interview, only Marion was the only one being threatened with eviction as no ASB was committed at her ex-husband’s property. Marion received no child benefit for Stacy as she was meant to officially be living with her father, but would regularly stay at her mother’s as he often refused to feed her. Moreover, at the time of their second interviews both Marion and Geoff were facing the prospect of a £1000 fine and/or imprisonment because of Stacy’s non-attendance at school. Due to the amount of conflict between Marion and Geoff, I interviewed them on two occasions each. Marion insisted that Stacy had mental health issues but this was not mentioned by her ex-husband. Marion was also suffering from depression and had been working with police and social services before being threatened with eviction.

Interviews 8 and 18: Geoff

Geoff is white British, lone-parent on benefits and at 57 years old was the oldest male interviewed. Geoff had been living in his council flat for four years when he was initially threatened with eviction because of Stacy’s ASB. Geoff would often refuse to feed or give Stacy access to his home if she misbehaved or truanted despite receiving the child benefit for her. At the time of his second interview, Geoff was no living under the threat of eviction as none of Stacy’s ASB had been committed in the vicinity of his property. However, he was still being held jointly responsible for his daughter’s truanting and as with his ex-wife Marion, was still facing the prospect of a £1000 fine and/or imprisonment for Stacy’s non-attendance at school. Geoff had also been working with the police and social services prior to receiving the threat of eviction.
Interview 9: Carl

Carl was 30 years old, white British, on benefits and lived with his partner, Lucy (see below), and their 3 children under the age of 6. This couple were evicted from Lucy’s housing association property because of disputed allegations of ASB against Carl. The couple were living in temporary accommodation provided by the FIP and three months into their intervention at the time of their separate interviews. Carl and Lucy were extremely scared at being made homeless and/or losing their children to the care system as they knew the permitted period for staying in this temporary accommodation was coming to an end. However, after a completing a six month intervention with the FIP they were moved by the council into supported housing. Carl had only previously involved with the police prior to being evicted.

Interview 10: Lucy

Lucy is white British, on benefits, and at twenty-two years old was the youngest participant interviewed. At the housing association property her and Carl were evicted from they also had rent arrears. They had lived in this property for thirteen months and Lucy was the sole tenancy holder. The move to this property was arranged through social workers because Lucy had left a previous domestically violent relationship which culminated with her ex-partner assaulting her whilst she was pregnant. Lucy had a long and arduous familial history of social services and police involvement and as with Carl, was terrified at the prospect of homelessness and/or losing the children to the care system.

Interview 11: Grant

Grant was 42 years old, white British and was living on benefits with his partner Sandra and their three sons (12, 11, and 10 years old) at the time of their eviction from a housing association property. This eviction followed from initial ASB complaints against another son who was only an infrequent visitor to their property and because they had accrued rent arrears. At the time of their separate interviews. Grant was living with relatives and Sandra and the three children were living in a one bedroom hostel and had temporarily split up as a couple because of the pressures of the eviction. The couple worked with the FIP for four months and were deemed as no longer requiring the intervention, won a rent arrears tribunal, got back together, and moved into the private rented sector. Grant had spent long periods of his life in prison for various offences and
insisted there was a police-led, multi-agency conspiracy against him and his family. The only agencies Grant had been involved with prior to being evicted were the police and social services.

Interview 12: Sandra

Sandra was 44 years old, living on benefits, white British, and was living with her partner (Grant) and their three children when they were evicted from a housing association property that she was the sole tenancy owner of. The couple and their three youngest sons had previously moved back to the town (approximately forty-five miles from South City) from Scotland because of concerns over gangs and the knife culture on their council estate. This move was arranged through social workers in Scotland and because of delays in transferring their housing benefit the couple had accrued rent arrears at the property from which they were subsequently evicted. Sandra had only been involved with social workers prior to being evicted.

Interview 13: Laura

Laura was 29 years old, white British, on benefits, had rent arrears, and living with Mark (see below) and their 3 children. Laura had a 12 year old daughter and a 10 year old son from a previous relationship and the couple had recently had a baby daughter together. This previous relationship had ended 5 years earlier because of incidents of domestic violence against Laura and the two eldest children still had regular contact with their biological father. The couple had been referred to the FIP by social services for two reasons: firstly, Laura’s son (Simon) had put their household at ‘future’ risk of eviction from their council property by verbally abusing other residents. I use the term ‘future’ risk because at the time of their separate interviews no written notice threatening eviction had been received from the council. Laura and Mark and their eldest daughter were also being regularly verbally and physically abused within the familial home by Simon. Laura was also a long term sufferer of depression. Laura was involved with social services, health visitors and SENCO prior to being referred to the FIP.
Interview 14: Mark

Mark was 28 years old, white British, on benefits and the partner of Laura. Mark had been previously threatened with eviction from his mother’s property for ASB prior to meeting Laura. Laura had a twelve year old daughter and a ten year old son from a previous relationship and the couple had recently had a baby daughter together. The couple suspected that Simon had ADHD, but he had not been diagnosed at the time of their separate interviews. Mark and Laura had been working with the FIP for five weeks when I interviewed them. Carl had previously been involved with the police and the local authority for allegations of ASB at his mother’s property.

Interview 16: Julie

Julie was a 35 year old lone-parent, white British, and living on benefits with her three sons (aged 5, 10, 16, and 16) and was threatened with eviction because of noise-related ASB complaints against her children. Julie had just commenced working with the FIP at the time of interview and expressed throughout that she regretted giving up a two bedroom house for a three bedroom flat, so that her family would have more space. Julie was being subjected to verbal abuse when she tried to set boundaries for her two eldest children and stated that when she first received the eviction notice it made her suicidal and severely depressed. Julie and her children had been working with social workers, the police and mental health agencies prior to being threatened with eviction.

Interview 19: Jess

Jess was a 38 year old lone-parent female, white British, on benefits, and living with her three sons (12, 13, 16 years old). Jess became involved with the FIP after being threatened with eviction and placed on a twelve month probationary tenancy by the council. Jess was working full-time but had to give up work to supervise her children. These sanctions were because of the ASB of her children and local youths, who were drinking and taking drugs at her property. Jess, at the time of her interview, was in the process of completing an exit plan from the FIP after a nine month intervention and had successfully stabilised her council tenancy. However, Jess was still being verbally abused by her children and had worked with social services and SENCO prior to the threat of eviction.
Interview 20: Sam

Sam was a 34 year old lone parent with four children (11, 10, 6, 4 years old), two boys and two girls, white British, and living on benefits. Sam had recently started working with the FIP at the time of her interview. Originally, it was believed that Sam’s children were the perpetrators of ASB, but at a recent multi-agency meeting it was noted that Sam and her family were in fact the real victims of ASB from their neighbours, who again had previously been close friends. These neighbours were regularly abusing and threatening not only Sam and her children, but also other visitors to her property. Sam also stated that she had suffered depression and had previously been involved with social services prior to the threat of eviction.
APPENDIX 2

Research advertisement:

**Have you been threatened with eviction because of the anti-social behaviour of another member of your household?**

I am a research student at the University of Surrey and carrying out a project into parent/s’ experiences of the threat of eviction from their local housing association/council. If you have been threatened with eviction, or actually evicted, because of anti-social behaviour from other members of your household, then I would be very interested to hear from you. Both Male and female participants are requested to take part in this study. Your participation will involve a one hour interview about your experiences and will be treated in the strictest confidence. Thank you very much for taking the time to consider this letter and the important contribution you can make. If you are interested in speaking to me please contact me directly and I will call you back:

Neil Sykes

Mobile Number – ( )

or e-mail – ns00047@surrey.ac.uk
APPENDIX 3

Interview Schedule

Background Information

- How long have you lived in this area? (Probe for recent housing history over the last 5 years).

Initial feelings following written notification threatening eviction.

- Can you tell me about the events that led to the threat of eviction?
- What did you do when you got the letter? (Probe for immediate and later responses).

Effects of the threat of eviction upon your household.

- Has the threat of eviction changed anything at home, or anything you do?
- What have been the effects upon your family as a whole following the threat of eviction?
- Has the threat of eviction had any positive outcomes?
- Has the threat of eviction had any negative outcomes?
- What do you feel about getting this letter?
Involvement with different agencies (probes).

- Did you have any dealings with other official agencies, such as the police or social services, before you received the threat of eviction?
- Have you had any dealings with other agencies as a result of the threat of eviction?
- What were/are the most positive aspects of your involvement with these agencies?
- What were/are the most negative aspects of your involvement with these agencies?

Preventative measures and general recommendations.

- Could anything have been done earlier to stop you receiving the threat of eviction?
- Do you feel there was any particular agency that could have prevented your current situation? What could they have done?
- Is there anything that could be done for you/your family that isn’t being done?
- Is there anything that could be done to help families such as yours in the future?
- Is there anything we have not covered?
APPENDIX 4

Information Sheet for Study Participants and Consent Form:
What is the research about?

This research is about the experiences of parent/s who have received written notification threatening eviction, or actually evicted from their local housing association/local authority property, because of anti-social behaviour from other members of their household.

If I take part, what will that involve?

I am looking for both male and female parent/s for a one-to-one informal interview about their experiences of receiving the threat of eviction. The interview will last approximately one hour; however, you may be invited to a follow up interview at a later time. During the interview you will be given the opportunity to speak openly about your experiences of the threat of eviction with your identity and personal details protected and without foreseen risk to yourself. The research is for a university project and will NOT be shared with any other parties. Your personal details (personal names, place names etc.) will be changed to protect your identity. You are free to change or remove specific details from your interview, as well as free to withdraw from the study at any time.

What will the information provided be used for?

Information gathered from the interviews will be used as part of a project which investigates parent/s’ experiences of the threat of, or actual eviction from their local authority/housing association property. The project may consist of research publications in which information from the interviews may be used (subject to all personal details such as names, places and locations appearing anonymous). The research project will act in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). Information will be stored by the researcher on secure computer for a total of 10 years and will be used strictly for professional purposes, such as future research and publications, and then destroyed. Anything you tell me in the interview will be kept confidential to me and my two supervisors, unless I am required by law to report something such as an intention to commit a crime which could result in harm to another person. If I am concerned about this, I will stop the interview and discuss it with you.

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Consent Form

- I, the undersigned, voluntarily agree to take part in the study on: The experiences of parent/s threatened with eviction.
- I have read and understood the Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigators of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.
- I consent to my personal data, as outlined in the accompanying information sheet, being used for the research project detailed in the information sheet, and agree that data collected may be shared with other researchers or interested parties. I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998).
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

Name of volunteer (BLOCK CAPITALS) ...........................................................
Signed ...........................................................................................................
Date ...............................................................................................

Name of researcher/person taking consent (BLOCK CAPITALS) ...........................................................
Signed ...........................................................................................................
Date ...............................................................................................