

Children's Rights Alliance

PRESS RELEASE

22 April 2005

For Immediate Release

Children's Rights Alliance Warn ASBOs Will Undermine Children Act

The Children's Rights Alliance expressed its concern today, April 22nd on the proposed introduction of anti social behaviour orders (ASBOs) and called on all politicians to behave responsibly when discussing crime and anti social behaviour.

ASBOs are a serious threat to the rights of all citizens, and in particular to children and young people. They are civil orders which require a lower standard of proof than criminal proceedings and can be based on hearsay evidence but if you breach an ASBO you risk jail sentences, said Sarah Benson, Communications Officer with the Children's Rights Alliance and Coordinator for the Coalition Against Anti Social Behaviour Orders"

"Due process and the rule of law should underpin any democracy. ASBOs undermine the rule of law because they criminalise our citizens, mainly children by the back door,".

"If young people are committing criminal offences, the police and the DPP have every right to bring criminal proceedings against them for doing so."

'Anti social behaviour' on the other hand can be tackled using the wide range of measures available under the Children Act 2001 and through support services based in local communities," said Sarah Benson.

"To be successful however, we must fully implement and resource the Children Act and resource existing support services. ASBOs are an unnecessary and counterproductive addition to the current framework for dealing with children in conflict with the law," said Sarah Benson.

The Children's Rights Alliance is a coalition of 79 non-governmental organisations concerned with the rights and needs of children. The Alliance works to secure the full implementation in Ireland of the principles and provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

END

For more information, contact: Sarah Benson, Children's Rights Alliance, Tel: 01 4054823 or 087 9273542, email sarah@cra.iol.ie