

Residents: our life is a living hell

Care: Action to be taken after windows smashed at Aberdeen children's home

BY NEIL JOHNSTON

An emergency meeting is to be held after a police car was damaged and nine windows smashed at a children's home which has seen a spate of anti-social behaviour in recent months.

The police vehicle was stoned by a group of youths and the next day nine windows at the £11m Marchburn Children's Home in Aberdeen were smashed. Two people have been charged separately in relation to the incidents.

The disruption at the home in Northfield, which was criticised in a report last week, has been blamed on children residing there and on a number of youths from the area.

Their actions have left many nearby householders scared, with one describing it as "a war zone".

"You can't go in your garden, you can't go outside. It's like they've taken over,"

said one resident who declined to be named.

"They throw things at us and hurt abuse. Everybody makes different directions to avoid the home."

Another person said they couldn't go on holiday while their grandchildren haven't visited since Christmas because "they

"You can't go in your garden, you can't go outside. It's like they've taken over"

are terrified". "Anything they can throw at our windows, car or garden they do.

"Our life has just gone down hill," she said.

"It's a living hell, it really is. It couldn't get much worse", she said.

On Tuesday, the windows were smashed after youths were seen throwing

stones. The previous day stones were thrown at a police car and a window was smashed, believed to be the back windscreen. A witness said: "There must have been other damage as well."

A police spokeswoman said they were aware of "ongoing issues" at the home.

"Over several months we have attended a significant number of calls, which we have supported the staff at the home with. We have taken appropriate action, but realise that a more sustained solution is needed and this essentially lies with others.

"We understand the challenges for residents in the area and we would like to provide reassurance that we'll continue to respond to calls and we'll continue to take appropriate action where necessary.

"We continue to work closely with Aberdeen City Council."



TRouble: Marchburn Children's Home where there has been a spate of incidents. Photograph: Karri Thomson

Emergency meeting follows disturbances

The emergency meeting next Monday with councillors, the director of social work, local residents and the police follows months of disturbances which have seen police answer "a significant number of calls" to

the home. The situation has become so bad for some council residents that at least two people living nearby have asked to be moved.

The disruption follows a report last week which

found the £11million children's home had experienced a "difficult opening period".

Inspectors reported staff admitted they were struggling to provide a "stable, safe and support-

ive environment" for the youngsters in their care.

Northfield councillor Gordon Graham, said: "It can't go on much longer."

He added: "We've got to get it back under control."