

Shop alarm can only be heard by teenagers

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TEENAGE gangs are being driven away from hanging around outside shops – thanks to an alarm only they can hear.

A machine that makes an ear-piercing noise that irritates young people has been installed at shops in the hope it will drive away gangs.

Robert Gough, who runs the Spar shop on Barry Road, Barry, is one of the first to try out the alarm called Mosquito, which is only clearly audible to under 20s.

He said: "We have gangs of youths congregating in the door way of the shop, which is intimidating, especially for elderly people and young children.

"They cause trouble in the shop, messing around, shoplifting and picking on people.

"The sound doesn't make them run away with fingers in their ears, but has worked as a deterrent, we're getting fewer and fewer gangs."

Mr Gough, 34, decided to try it to see if it would work for other businesses in the area as he is a member of local crime-prevention groups.

He said: "I've had teenagers asking me to turn it off as it's 'doing their head in'. It grates on your nerves if you're stood outside. Some teen-

HOW IT WORKS

■ THE 9in-high Mosquito, which is mounted on an outside wall and can't be heard in the shop, emits high-frequency electronic pulses made by a tone generator.

■ It is fitted with a siren horn, like ones used in car alarms.

■ The £500 machine beeps at half-second intervals and has a range of 20 to 30 metres.

■ It affects young people because their hearing is more acute than that of adults.

■ The Mosquito is similar to underground gardening alarms that prevent moles digging up lawns.

■ It is controlled by a timer set from inside the shop and can switch on when youths are more likely to be loitering.

agers have asked what it is – I said it was to keep birds away because of bird flu."

Merthyr-born inventor Howard Stapleton, of Compound Security Systems in Cambridgeshire, came up with the idea after reading about hearing levels changing with age.

Mr Gough, dad of 12-year-old Paige and 14-year-old Robin, said: "It sounds like a high-pitched chirping noise.

"It's quiet to me but my children, although they think it's a good idea, say it sounds hideous."