

The Most Harmful Offending Behaviour

Delivery Plan

Mission Statement

To continue to reduce Serious Acquisitive Crime through a focus on the issues of greatest need in each locality and the most harmful offenders – particularly drug-misusing offenders

LAA 37 measured by National Indicators: 16 Reduction in level of serious acquisitive crime and; 30 Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders

Introduction and Evidence

The aim is to continue to reduce serious acquisitive crime, which has been defined by government as the following –

- Burglary in a dwelling
- Aggravated burglary in a dwelling
- Robbery of a business property
- Robbery of personal property
- Aggravated vehicle taking
- Theft or unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle
- Theft from a motor vehicle

Effort will concentrate on targeting and managing the most harmful offenders into the Prolific and Priority Offender Unit (PPOU) and by making targets harder or less desirable to steal.

Home Office reports* show that 5,000 offenders – 0.5% of active offenders - are responsible for 10% of all crime. The financial cost of this crime has been estimated to be at least £2 billion.

The PPO scheme aims to “prevent and deter” these high level offenders from committing crime by targeting them into an intensive regime of surveillance, support and rehabilitation.

CDRP chairs are required in PPO guidance to deliver a “premium service” to manage the most prolific 15-20 offenders in their district. Devon LAA was granted a freedom and flexibility to aggregate and manage this target at the County level, ie 120 – 160 PPOs across the County.

The following data comes from a piece of research commissioned on behalf of the SDP to assess the impact of the PPOU in Devon and to consider different models of delivery.¹

“There are a number of issues to consider when evaluating a reduction in re-offending:

- The number of convictions and
- The impact or seriousness of the offences.
- If an offender is imprisoned they are clearly unable to commit further offences which will have a further impact on crime figures.
- Finally, the increased attention via PPO increases the chances of detection and conviction for any offence.

The data available allows a comparison of offending before and after PPO for North & East Devon BCU, but not at present South & West BCU due to different data collection systems. The establishment of one BCU for Devon and Torbay will facilitate the development of a single performance monitoring framework.

¹ Options for the future of the PPO scheme in Devon. R Tamlyn, M Napier, November 2007

The table below shows the average conviction rate per year of PPOs, A – in the 3 years prior to their engagement in the PPO scheme, B – average conviction during their time on the scheme and C – conviction the year following removal from the scheme. Column D shows the percentage reduction between A and C.

N&E Devon BCU crime rate per 30 days in the community (convictions)				
Quarter	A 3 years prior to entering PPO scheme	B During PPO scheme	C 1 year following removal from PPO scheme	D Change in rates of offending before scheme to after scheme
Q1 2007/08	0.86	0.60	0.15	-56%
Q2 2007/08	0.88	0.60	0.15	-59%
Q3 2007/08	0.89	0.56	0.11	-61%

71 PPOs are represented in column C allowing for a more significant evaluation of the scheme's impact. We can see from column D the year on year improvement in crime reduction.

The data for S&W BCU is presented in a different way and only allows comparison of offending before and during the scheme.

Offences		
	Before PPO Scheme	During PPO Scheme
S&W BCU New Devon	689	220

Again we see significant reductions; unlike above, these are not presented as percentages because the data provided did not confirm that the time periods were equivalent.

Whilst these figures are impressive, we need to be clear that the benefit is delivered by PPOU and cannot be achieved via any other route. A Home Office report² compares changes in the offending behaviour of a PPO cohort to a carefully matched control group:

Time since commencement	Reduction in re-offending	
	PPO Cohort	Control group
Three months	33%	27%
Six months	27%	20%
Twelve months	42%	27%

Practitioners describe the added value of PPO as fourfold:

1. Focus on the offender. The offer: once an offender is identified, the Police will target them. If the offender agrees to engage with the scheme, this offers a route for them away from crime. If the offender chooses not to engage, the increased focus will inevitably result in arrest and probable loss of liberty.
2. Enhanced access to the rehabilitation strand (in practice rapid access to drug treatment).
3. Increased intensity of supervision. This includes frequent drug testing, intensive contact with Police, Probation and drug treatment services.
4. A co-ordinated multi agency approach, facilitating access to housing, education and training etc".

² Dawson P and Cuppleditch L. An impact assessment of the Prolific and other Priority Offender programme Home Office Online Report 08/07

Delivery Plan

Devon has three well established Prolific and Priority Offender Units covering Exeter, East and Mid Devon, Northern Devon and South and West Devon.

PPOUs 'grip' offenders, closely managing their offending behaviours and addressing criminogenic factors such as drug and alcohol misuse, lack of suitable housing and debt and unemployment. The outcomes of the PPO scheme are interdependent with those of work to address social inclusion for the county's most vulnerable groups.

PPOUs work closely with the Drug Intervention Programme workers to maintain treatment engagement and manage PPOs into and out of prison.

The delivery partners, Police, Probation and Devon Partnership Trust (health), are jointly responsible for day to day delivery. PPO guidance describes roles for Housing, Education and Youth Offending Teams (YOT) and their respective roles vary across both the county and in Torbay.

Project title	Action (including geographic coverage)	Project lead	Resources	Delivery dates	Performance measures
Deliver PPO scheme across Devon	PPO across Devon	Police	£115,858	Ongoing	NI 30 rate of re-offending by prolific and other priority offenders