

ANNUAL REPORT ON PPO SCHEME

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The PPO programme is intended to direct resources to the small number of offenders said to be responsible for a disproportionate amount of all crime. The programme was introduced in all areas of England and Wales from the 6th September 2004, and has been implemented by Crime and Disorder partnerships and Community Safety partnerships across all area of England and Wales. The scheme in Stockton commenced in September 2004 with an initial caseload of 23.
- 1.2 There is no doubt that there have been improvements in both information sharing and partnership working between agencies involved in the PPO programme. Practitioners working within the PPO scheme feel they have developed a more holistic understanding of the offender which has led to better management. The importance of a multi-agency approach and the availability of appropriate services are particularly crucial given the particular needs of the PPOs that usually include accommodation, drugs misuse and education, training and employability.

2. The PPO Team

- 2.1 The team consists of a manager, a seconded Probation officer, a seconded police officer and an outreach worker. All are co-located at the Stockton Probation office at Advance House, Teasdale Park. The PPO team have been together since the 6th September 2004 albeit there have been changes of the manager, the probation officer and the post of outreach worker was introduced in June 2006 as an additional member of staff.

3. The Process

- 3.1 Case Conferencing process lies at the heart of the PPO Strategy. An action plan is drawn up in respect of each of the 41 PPOs at a multi-agency Case Conference and reviewed at least quarterly. The agencies represented at the conferences are: - Probation, Police, Prisons, Local Authority (Housing and Community Safety) YOS, CJIT, Treatment Providers, CARAT, ETE, Voluntary agencies (e.g. Pathway Project). The PPO Manager chairs the review which is a forum for the sharing of information thus providing the best opportunity to the offender to access all available local services. The offender is encouraged, where possible, to attend the final part of the conference to be advised of, and to comment on, the action plan. This part of the process is felt to be invaluable in re-enforcing, at first hand, the help available to meet the offender's diverse needs and also the commitment of all agencies to monitoring and enforcement in the event of a refusal to co-operate. Between reviews a core group (Police, Probation, CJIT and other partners where appropriate) meet to discuss any issues that arise in respect of an individual offender. This ensures that timely and relevant information is exchanged to all those involved in the delivery of services to the offender.

3.2 As an identified PPO the offender will be subject to Intensive Supervision and an agreed Premium Service Protocol. This ensures that swift, positive action is taken against an offender if he/she transgresses or fails to co-operate. The Intensive supervision includes:-

- a) each PPO is conferenced every 3 – 6 months (unless serving a lengthy prison sentence)
- b) four contacts a week (reviewed by Conference)
- c) fast-tracked into treatment
- d) prioritised by SBC Housing Options (four dwellings reserved for DIP/PPO clients)
- e) fast-tracked recalls and breaches
- f) twice weekly drug testing of licensees in accordance with PC 34/2005
- g) Citizenship Programme to target criminogenic need in accordance with National Action Plan on Reducing Re-offending
- h) outreach worker to focus on motivating offenders and provide intensive practical support to enhance compliance and successful outcomes
- i) end-to-end offender management
- j) report centre at the Birchtree Practice available to enhance engagement and compliance
- k) attendance of Outreach worker in Holme House prison weekly
- l) Offenders encouraged to attend CJIT football course and Sports programme.

4. Developments

4.1 Since the last report the major change in the scheme has been the alignment with the Criminal Justice Interventions team. Home Office guidance in May 2007 urged Community Safety Partnerships to align the two programmes in order to maximise the impact on those offenders who were committing crime and mis-using drugs.

4.2 The Home Office rationale was that closer alignment of DIP and PPO schemes should help to:

- deliver an improved focus on the identification of offenders to be targeted; and
- Reduce the risk of problematic offenders falling between the gap between the two programmes.

4.3 It was stated that alignment would help to ensure that all offenders of most concern to the police and other agencies were targeted, including the highest crime causing drug-misusers. While many CJIT clients were primarily identified through drug testing on arrest or, in DIP non-intensive areas through drug workers in the custody suite, the selection of PPOs is more flexible and based on local priorities. This means that, where appropriate, drug misusing offenders who are not currently in the criminal justice system can be considered for selection as PPOs, such as those repeat offenders who are known to DIP but who have either not fully responded to previous offers of treatment or have consistently failed to co-operate or respond to the treatment provided.

4.4 The right interaction between DIP and PPO schemes also brings with it the opportunity to improve the case/offender management of targeted offenders. The management of offenders within the PPO programme is more intensive and coercive than under DIP. So drug misusing offenders who have a history of non-

compliance or non-cooperation with DIP could be referred on to the local PPO selection panel for consideration as PPOs, to benefit from the more intensive PPO offender management regime, as a means of securing their engagement and reductions in offending and drug misuse. Similarly, in the case of more compliant PPOs, who respond positively to the PPO offender management regime, but who have continuing drug misuse issues or who are in danger of relapse, consideration can be given to referral to the CJIT team to oversee their continuing case management for a further period, as part of a managed exit strategy from the PPO programme.

- 4.5 As a consequence of this guidance a meeting was arranged in June 2007, with both the CJIT and PPO steering groups meeting to discuss possible alignment it was agreed that alignment was both feasible and advisable, although given financial constraints and a lack of resources it was not going to be possible in the short term to co-locate the two teams.
- 4.6 As a result a single Strategy group was formed to oversee both programmes with the formation of an Operational group to ensure delivery and engagement of all partners in the respective schemes. To date both groups have met and are functioning effectively and efficiently.
- 4.7 From an operational perspective I am pleased to report that all agencies and partners in Stockton have always worked very closely and cooperatively and that still exists ensuring a true alliance and partnership.

5. Performance

- 5.1 Members will recall that for the financial year 2007/8 a target had to be set in the LAA structure which measured the effectiveness of the PPO scheme in reducing crime by those targeted offenders. Stockton selected a cohort of 32 offenders to identify a baseline in their offending (those crimes with which they were charged 12 months prior to entry on the scheme and those offences with which they were charged 12 months whilst on the scheme). This actually equated to a figure of 153 crimes against 103 crimes, a reduction of 32%. The target was to reduce crime by this cohort by a further 15% over three years, (5% per annum). This year's target is therefore a reduction of 37%.
- 5.2 From April to September the actual number of crimes committed by this cohort is 30 which using a simple multiplication equation would equate to a full year total of 60 should this continue. Set against the baseline of 153 offences this would relate to a reduction of 60.8%.
- 5.3 Of particular concern is the apparent increase of theft from shops. This has been subject to a separate research and report. Initial findings reveal that in their offending history our current group of PPOs have been charged with a total of 690 thefts from shops.
- 5.4 With the increase in staff we have now increased our offenders to 41 (from the original commencement of 23) as of the 23rd November 2007. Of those 41 offenders, 9 are in the community and subject to either Community orders or prison licence, 8 are in the community and not subject to any statutory supervision, 23 are in custody serving custodial sentences and 1 is remanded in custody awaiting trial/sentence.

- 5.5 Of the 41 PPOs, 7 are subject to Criminal Anti-Social behaviour Orders (CRASBOs) and there are 5 cases pending.
- 5.6 During the past year we have de-registered five offenders from the scheme. Two are very positive, SF (male 28 years) has now been drug and crime free for twelve months. He is currently in full time employment
- 5.7 NL (male 31 years is now in a stable relationship, drug free and crime free for 11 months). One (JR male 29 years) has moved to the North Yorkshire area to move away from temptation in Stockton and working with North Yorkshire Probation he has not been arrested since that transfer in August 2007.
- 5.8 Two (SF male 32 years) and (MB 34 years) have both been acquisitive crime free for over 12 months. However the former still has alcohol addiction issues and the latter was sentenced to a period of imprisonment for indecent assault.
- 5.9 Of those in the community our assessment is that five are showing a positive attitude to changing their lifestyle and offending and are therefore progressing.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The scheme continues to work with the most challenging of offenders within the Borough. Whilst it always difficult to identify whether the most prolific offenders have been selected the only gratifying factor of seeing a significant number in custody is that quite clearly they have been offending to a degree that prison has been seen by the judiciary to be the most appropriate sentence.
- 6.2 Satisfyingly for the team has been the overall reduction in offending but the more positive outcome is the fact that two have changed their lifestyle and are in employment. Whilst this is a very small percentage of the total number, on a simple cost benefit analysis, that level of success virtually covers the cost of the scheme.

Jeff Evans

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