

ANALYSIS OF OFFENDING BY PPOs

1. Introduction

1.1 This report examines the offending by those offenders who have been designated as Prolific and other priority offenders by the Safer Stockton Partnership. It also examines the correlation of thefts from shops by this group as compared to their predominant offences. Whilst examining this aspect of their offending it seemed appropriate to examine the number of times the same offenders have been arrested and drug tested on arrest, since 2003 when drug testing on arrest was introduced. This cohort consists of thirty-three offenders who were on the scheme between the 1st January and 30th June 2007.

1.2 The reader must take cognisance of the fact that because of the lengthy time scale examining this data most of these offenders will have spent periods of time in custody, or on remand, and will not therefore have been at liberty in the community all of the time. Similarly whilst they have been arrested and drug tested on numerous occasions those arrests may not always result in a criminal conviction for a variety of reasons.

1.3 In the financial year 2007/8 a target had to be set in the LAA framework which measured the effectiveness of the PPO scheme in reducing crime by those targeted offenders. Stockton selected a cohort of 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 years target is therefore 37%

2. Methodology

2.1 The data contained in appendix A is straightforward. It examines the number of times an individual PPO has been arrested and drug tested on arrest whilst in the custody suite. It details the initials, sex and age of the offender in column 1. Thereafter in the next columns it details the number and outcome of the tests for the years 2003 until 30th June 2007. The final column outlines the number of positive tests. The legend is as follows:-

+ve = positive
-ve = negative
C = Cocaine
O = Opiates

2.2 The data contained in appendix B includes offender initials, sex and age, total number of convictions, number of offences, and their dominant offence when introduced onto the scheme, the number of theft from shops and finally the percentage of shop thefts as a total of their convictions.

3. Summary

3.1 It is extremely difficult to identify key trends in offending by this cohort. However there are clear indications with a number of offenders that their drug problem increases their likelihood of more prolific offending:-

- This cohort has an average age of 28.3 years
- A total of 947 convictions (av 28.6 per person)
- Have been convicted of 2788 offences (av. 84.4 per person)
- Burglary is the predominant offence
- They are responsible for 672 shop thefts (av 20.3. per person)
- 18% of their total offending is shop theft.
- They have been tested positive for illicit drugs in custody on 284 occasions
- (av 8.6 times per person)
- where burglary is the predominant offence 10 offenders had very few convictions for theft from shops
- However where burglary had been the predominant offence 9 offenders had convictions for theft from shops
- Those offenders whose predominant offence was theft from shops had a large number of convictions and also the highest number of positive drug tests (CP, TC, PJ, SW, MH SG)
- It is interesting that the above group have by far the most positive drug tests which would indicate that despite their prolific offending they are in the community to continue to offend

4. Conclusions

4.1 It has been identified that the largest increase in crime is the “other theft “ category which includes theft from shops and theft of scrap metal, which although not detailed in this report is also increasing due to the high value of the scrap metal.

4.2 Between April and October 2007 offences of theft across the whole of the Borough have increased over and above the corresponding period last year by 560 offences, a 26.8 % increase.

4.3 There is clear evidence that the PPO cohort use shoplifting to support their illicit drug misuse probably for a number of reasons:-

- Availability of items in local shops
- Easy to sell stolen items
- Unlikely to result in a remand in custody for an initial first, second offence
- Does not usually carry a tariff of a custodial sentence

4.4 It is intended that this report should be used as a catalyst to generate and stimulate debate as to how the offence of shop thefts can be tackled, thus reducing the number of crimes being committed.

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