

Key Messages for the Prolific & other Priority Offender Programme – May 2007

Overarching

The Prolific & other Priority Offender (PPO) Programme is a crime reduction programme with a focus on reducing re-offending. Its aim is to identify and grip the relatively small hard-core of offenders who commit a disproportionate amount of crime and damage in their communities.

Led by the Home Office, it is a cross-Government programme launched by the Prime Minister in September 2004 and it has since evidenced significant success in reducing offending.

Multi-agency teams of criminal justice agencies, local authorities and other partners operate PPO schemes in local communities and identify – through police intelligence systems and other tools – their highest crime-causing offenders. Of the 100,000 offenders in England and Wales who are responsible for over half of all crime, 10,000 of those with a history of the most prolific offending are now being managed by a PPO scheme.

The three strands of the Programme aim to:

- **Catch & Convict** offenders who commit most crime in their locality, or whose offending causes most harm to their community;
- **Rehabilitate & Resettle** PPOs, working with them to stop their offending by offering a range of supportive interventions – backed by a swift return to court if the behaviour continues – to address identified needs and risks of further offending.
- **Prevent & Deter** the most active young offenders from escalating into tomorrow's prolific offenders through youth justice interventions and continued post-sentence support.

Schemes are increasingly working closely with the Drug Interventions Programme (DIP), which aims to get drug-misusing offenders out of crime and into treatment, so that maximum benefit is derived in the reduction of drug misuse, crime and re-offending where offenders fall into the "cross over" group by being of interest to both programmes.

The **key messages** about the PPO Programme are:

- The Programme is successful in helping reduce re-offending in England and Wales. A full evaluation, published in February, shows that the re-offending rates of those involved over a 17-month period reduced significantly, as evidenced by a 62 per cent fall in recorded convictions.
- It features an end-to-end offender management approach to tackle re-offending within local communities and involves more joined-up working and information sharing between the relevant agencies.
- Prolific & other Priority Offenders (PPOs) are subject to intense police supervision and are offered interventions to change their offending behaviour or face a swift return to the courts.
- 10,000 PPOs are being managed in over 250 Catch & Convict and Rehabilitate & Resettle schemes across England and Wales.

- 4,000 of the most active young offenders, who have also been identified as being most at risk of becoming the next generation of PPOs, are being managed by 179 Prevent & Deter schemes.
- Home Office scoping shows that a high proportion of PPOs, particularly in high acquisitive crime areas, are committing crime to fund a drug dependency and the alignment between the PPO and DIP Programmes is intended to grip these people effectively. This will deliver significant benefits to the offenders themselves, as well as to local communities.
- There is no intention that, in more closely aligning the work, the two programmes should be merged; nor is there any intention to disrupt governance arrangements that are already working well at a local level. Recently published guidance sets out the detail on alignment, which will facilitate more “two-way traffic” between local schemes and more routine cross-referencing between caseloads.