

A close-up photograph of a person's hands cuffed behind their back. The person is wearing a blue uniform, likely a police officer. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be a vehicle or a similar setting. The text "PROLIFIC AND OTHER PRIORITY OFFENDERS" is overlaid in white on a black horizontal band across the middle of the image.

PROLIFIC AND OTHER PRIORITY OFFENDERS

The Prolific and Priority Offenders Strategy launched in 2004 recommended a locally delivered programme to change the behaviour of prolific and other priority offenders (PPOs)¹ through three strands:

- prevent and deter
- catch and convict and
- resettle and rehabilitate

The Home Office estimates that prolific and priority offenders account for around 50 per cent of all crime. Plymouth has 60 identified prolific and priority offenders at any one time.

On average there are between 20 and 30 actively committing crime in Plymouth. Members of the multi-agency Prolific and Priority Offender Unit are already vigilant in their monitoring of prolific and priority offender activity, but there is room for some improvement.

The CDRP has overall responsibility for ensuring there are strategies in place for delivery of the whole Prolific and Priority Offender programme. In Plymouth, our Lead agencies are:

- Police (Catch and Convict)
- Probation Services (Rehabilitate and Resettle)
- YOS (Prevent and Deter)

Two prolific and priority offender cohorts² are the subject of an LAA stretch target. To achieve this target we need to reduce the number of recorded convictions for each cohort identified. We are currently achieving this target.

Prolific and Priority Offenders continue to be the main causes of acquisitive crimes such as domestic burglary and vehicle crime and this is often linked to the high level of substance misuse by them. It is recognised that all strands of the scheme have to be active, with commitment by many agencies in order to reduce the level of offending - enforcement alone will not work.

A range of multi-agency work is ongoing to support prolific and priority offenders. A key element of this work is the provision of drug treatment, along with various other interventions and elements of social inclusion work. Some of this work is to stabilise the lifestyle of an offender and provide the opportunity to change their behaviour. There is also work being undertaken to engage with prison-leavers at the earliest opportunity to discourage them from returning to a previous way of life.

The Prolific and Priority Offender Strategy Group was set up last year and is chaired by Devon & Cornwall Probation. This group monitors performance and makes decisions to commission projects. There is also an operations group who decides who will be on the scheme and who will be taken off. The group does this by risk assessing their likelihood of offending.

¹ A PPO is defined as an offender who is accepted onto the Plymouth PPO Scheme by the PPO multi-agency panel. The offender will be flagged as a 'PPO' on the Police National Computer (PNC) and on the local computer system.

² (Cohort 1) - Number of convictions recorded by the police for all PPOs (Prolific and Other Priority Offenders) who were registered on the PPO scheme at 31st March 2007

(Cohort 2) - Number of convictions recorded by the police for all PPOs joining the PPO scheme between 1st April 2007 and 31st March 2008