



To: Chairs of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England
Chairs of Community Safety Partnerships in Wales
Chairs of Local Criminal Justice Boards

cc Please see attached list

17 March 2008

Dear Colleague,

PROLIFIC AND OTHER PRIORITY OFFENDER (PPO) PROGRAMME: BUILDING ON SUCCESS

1. There has been great success achieved by the PPO programme and its key stakeholders since its start nearly four years ago. The report of the national evaluation of the programme, published in early 2007, showed that those PPOs first taken on to the programme in 2004 significantly reduced their re-offending rates over their first 17 months on the programme. There is no doubt that local PPO schemes have contributed to the impressive reductions in crime within the outgoing Public Service Agreement (PSA).

2. This is largely attributable to strong multi-agency, offender-focused partnership work. The commitment, energy and hard work invested in the PPO programme, at both strategic and front-line practitioner level, are fundamental to its continuing success.

3. The PPO programme remains a key Government priority for tackling crime and reducing re-offending. The value of, and continued need for, the programme is given prominence in the Home Office Crime Strategy, the National Community Safety Plan and the Criminal Justice System Strategic Plan. It is also strongly positioned within the Government's new suite of Public Service Agreements, which were published in October 2007. In particular, PSA 23: *Make Communities Safer* makes it clear that all areas should be making full use of the PPO programme to tackle prolific offenders. The programme will also contribute significantly to other PSAs, including those focused on drugs, adult reoffending, employment, accommodation and young people.

4. The re-offending of PPOs is also included in the new performance framework for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships¹, and the Assessments of Policing

¹ National Indicator 30 is 'Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders'



and Community Safety (APACS)². From April 2008, all areas will be required to report on the re-offending rate of PPOs, whether or not National Indicator 30 improvement target is included within the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

5. The national methodology for monitoring against these indicators will be supported by functionality on the national PPO tracking system (JTrack). This functionality has been developed to provide a baseline for each scheme, using data downloaded from the Police National Computer. We will be providing further guidance on this methodology to local areas but because it is dependent on JTrack being up to date it is essential that all local areas ensure that their PPOs are recorded accurately on the system as soon as possible.

6. From the contact that I and my colleagues in the Home Office and the regional Government Offices have with you and with front-line practitioners, we know that dealing with PPOs on a daily basis is very challenging. Put simply, they are one of the most difficult offender groups to monitor, manage and change. Your personal commitment, and that of all those working to deliver local PPO schemes, is an essential part in the drive to address the offending behaviour of PPOs. I should therefore like to thank you and your colleagues for your continued support. It is essential that we continue to do all we can to embed this work into local delivery structures, share learning and build on your successes to date to continue to improve safety in all of our communities.

STEPHEN CAHILL

Acting Director, Police and Crime Standards

² Statutory Performance Indicator 10.1 is "The change in convictions for Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPOs) over a 12 month period".