

CASE STUDY

BEFORE

In comparison to the majority of PPO's in Hartlepool X, was a late starter in regards to crime. He had completed his education without any particular problems, appeared to come from a reasonably stable family and had begun working after a short spell in further education. At the age eighteen he began to experiment with drugs, along with a group of friends and very quickly progressed to heroin use. X described the changes that took place when he began to inject heroin and a previously law abiding citizen began to commit acquisitive crime to fund his new habit. It was at the age of eighteen that he was first convicted of a Theft and a TWOC. He continued to offend regularly over the coming years, mainly acquisitive crimes such as shoplifting and burglary but he is probably best known to the Police for his thefts from cars. Prior to his identification as PPO it was estimated by the Police that he was probably responsible for one third of such crimes in Hartlepool.

There have been no significant breaks in his offending and he has been dealt with in a variety by the Courts, including short custodial sentences and most community sentences. His drug use over this time has altered little, with heroin remaining his major drug of choice, and as with his offending there have been no significant breaks in his use. He consistently links his offending as purely related to his drug use. One of the obvious outcomes is lack of employment as an adult and in his case a very poor self-worth. In late 2003 he was made the subject of a Drug Treatment and Testing Order, this was quickly breached and in the first nine months of 2004 he was convicted at Court on a further five occasions.

AFTER

In October 2004, X was unsurprisingly identified amongst the first group of PPO's in Hartlepool. The very prolific nature of his offending at this time meant that he was soon back before the Court and was one of the first PPO's to be given a condition to attend the Dordrecht Initiative as part of his Community Rehabilitation Order. He and his parents, with whom he was living, were very pessimistic about his chances of complying with the Initiative. The early part of the order involved stabilising him in drug treatment with Methadone to replace his heroin use. Staff worked hard to motivate X at this point and focus on the positive things he was doing. This also involved the Initiative's Police Officer and Probation Staff undertaking home visits trying to accentuate the positives with his parents as often he received negative comments from them. X stabilised in drug treatment and Police intelligence seemed to show both a decrease in thefts from vehicles and his name being linked with the thefts that did occur.

The work with X then moved into focussing on the future, this was problematic for him as he has achieved very little to date in his life and the hurdles faced seemed to be high. On a practical level this involved staff assisting him in breaking down his longer term goals into smaller manageable steps. He began to work with Hartlepool Offenders Project Endeavours (HOPE) to improve his literacy and numeracy, with the longer term goal of gaining employment. This has now progressed to the stage where he will be attending college during the summer term to undertake examinations. X has

also spent time both one to one and as part of a larger group, on activities arranged by the DIP liaison outreach worker. These have been valuable in improving his self-worth and his inclusion in the local community. In particular this has been important in rebuilding his relationship with his young son. His son is cared for by his sister and her partner, this was difficult for X to come to terms with. He felt guilty about his lack of contact and what he perceived as his poor parenting. The outreach worker identified a number of activities that X could undertake with his son in the local area with little or no cost. She accompanied him initially on these visits to boost his confidence and he continues with his regular contact to this day.

The main difficulty with X has continued to be his drug use, whilst this has decreased from upwards of £50 daily he has continued to use heroin occasionally on top of his methadone. In recent weeks this use has begun to increase again and the information was supplied to Hartlepool Police by the Initiative's own Police Officer to monitor for any increase in his crime type or in his local area. Additionally more intensive work was undertaken by nursing and probation staff on the Initiative to increase X's motivation again and his medication was increased. The relapse now appears to be under control but during this short period of time X committed his first offence for nine months, the longest crime free period since the commencement of his offending. When X appeared in Court the progress to date was available and the Court recognised this when imposing a Conditional Discharge. X acknowledges without the intensive supervision and monitoring offered by the Dordrecht Initiative he would have been in throes of a full relapse and a mini-crime wave.