



**PRIORITY 4**



# REDUCE REOFFENDING

## KEY FACTS

- Almost half of all adult offenders reoffend within a year of leaving custody
- Around half of all crime is committed by people who have already been through the Criminal Justice System
- The cost to the taxpayer of reoffending is estimated to be between £9.5 and £13 billion nationally
- Ministry of Justice research has found 85% victim satisfaction and a 14% reduction in the frequency of reoffending as a result of Restorative Justice approaches.

This priority is cross-cutting – it impacts on a number of other priorities within the Plan and those of partner agencies. It acknowledges, at a strategic level, the role played by the Police and others in reducing reoffending. It also focuses on the management of those offenders responsible for the highest risk crimes and incidents, or on the greatest volume of offences through all of the priorities.

There is an acknowledged gap within the criminal justice system when offenders leave prison and re-enter society. This is especially the case with offenders who are not supervised on licence by Probation i.e. those sentenced to less than a years imprisonment. The Commissioner has pledged to ensure that there are effective mentoring services and support available especially in relation to the criminals who pose the greatest risk to the communities of Dorset.

## TRANSFORMING REHABILITATION

This priority is also the subject of significant Government reforms being undertaken nationally which bring their own challenges locally as these changes take effect. Probation Trusts are being reorganised into a single national public sector Probation Service and 21 Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRCs). CRCs will then transfer over to successful bidders following a competition process.

The Probation Service will retain responsibility for the supervision of high-risk offenders, with CRCs providing services for low-to-medium risk offenders. Every offender released from custody will therefore receive statutory supervision and rehabilitation into the community.

A nationwide 'through the prison gate' resettlement service is also being introduced, meaning that most offenders will be given continuous support from custody to the community by one provider. The biggest challenge to the OPCC, Dorset Police and partners has been the decision by the Government, made during this transition, that Dorset prisoners will be housed in Devon and that Dorset prisons will house offenders from Avon and Somerset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire. This increases the challenges ahead and time will tell whether they will adversely affect the reducing reoffending agenda within Dorset.

However, despite this challenge, the Commissioner is committed to engaging and working closely with the Probation Service, the CRC, prison governors and other key partners in reducing reoffending locally.

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### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The Commissioner is keen to build on the success in Dorset in relation to Restorative Justice and to expand this important means of restoration for victims of adult offenders, which can also reduce the risk of reoffending. The Commissioner also wishes to extend victim conferencing with offenders into prisons and to extend and evaluate Neighbourhood Justice Panels in Dorset. Using government funding for Restorative Justice co-ordination, the OPCC will also be employing a Restorative Justice Co-ordinator to bring together best practice from across the County.

### WHAT WE WILL DO

- The OPCC and Dorset Police will work effectively in partnership to ensure that information about offenders and the risks they pose is shared effectively, and those risks are properly managed.
- The Commissioner will work with partners to ensure that support for offenders, such as effective mentoring, is in place.
- The Chief Constable will ensure that Dorset Police will deal firmly and quickly with those offenders who breach conditions put in place to manage the risk they pose.
- The Commissioner will explore more advanced tagging of offenders.
- The Chief Constable will ensure that Dorset Police will identify the top tier of 80 offenders and put mechanisms in place to support them to change.
- The Commissioner will seek to extend victim conferencing in prisons, and Neighbourhood Justice Panels.
- The Commissioner and the OPCC will work towards specific interventions for female offenders and war veterans. Both cohorts of offenders have complex motives and needs and a specialised response is needed for both groups.

### WHAT RESULTS ARE WE SEEKING TO ACHIEVE?

- More offenders, especially those who pose the highest risk to people, will cease or reduce their offending.
- More offenders will be supported along the pathways out of offending, whether it is by a mentor or other means according to their particular need.
- More offenders will be provided with access to appropriate housing, training or employment.
- More victims will be offered alternative justice through Neighbourhood Justice Panels and Victim Conferencing.

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