

Prolific burglar intensive programme

An intensive community order that replaces a burglary defendant's custodial sentence.

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Key details

Does it work?	Untested – new or innovative
Focus	Reoffending
Topic	Anti-social behaviour Community engagement Crime prevention Criminal justice Offender management Operational policing
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Region	Eastern
Partners	Criminal justice (includes prisons, probation services) Education Health services Local authority Voluntary/not for profit organisation

Key details

Stage of practice	The practice is implemented.
Start date	January 2022
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults Offenders

Aim

- Rehabilitation of prolific acquisitive offenders.
- Prevention of reoffending with deferment of sentence.

Intended outcome

The proportion of successful completers of the programme does not have to be high in order to be significant. That isn't the measure of success here. Success is measured in a reduction in reoffending.

The programme is intended to lead to a significant increase in the detection of both reported and unreported offences.

Those who do not complete the difficult course may nevertheless cease or reduce their offending in some way – often for a significant period of time, if not forever.

Description

We set up a four-stage programme as follows.

Stage one – up to the point of release on bail

Assessments and interviews are carried out by Probation and Integrated Offender Management (IOM) teams, usually jointly, in prison with the offenders to consider suitability for the program. A pre-sentence report will be prepared for the court. Offenders will appear in Crown Court and told that all essential decisions will be taken by the judge but that, if they wish to go on the programme, they will be given the chance to try it. Bail conditions will be set and agreed.

These offenders should only be released on bail when suitable accommodation is available for them. Ideally, that is likely to mean accommodation away from the haunts of former criminal colleagues, family and friends.

Before being released on bail, they must formally ask for all their previous offending to be taken into consideration. They are expressly told beforehand that if they fail on the programme, it will lead to a longer prison sentence. Bail is then granted.

Stage two – from bail to deferment of sentence

The initial bail period is generally for four to six weeks. After this it is reviewed and, if necessary, extended. During this period, the offender will be subject to drug and/or alcohol treatment, supervision and attendance at various assessments, and their level of commitment is tested.

Offenders requiring residential rehabilitation to deal with addictions should be housed early because of the time involved in this type of rehabilitation, even if it means extending the bail period by many months.

Stage three – deferment of sentence

Deferment of sentence is always for a period of six months. Sentencing powers enables the court, with the consent of the offender, to:

- impose requirements as to their conduct during the period of deferment
- secure from them an undertaking to comply with those requirements
- appoint a person to supervise and monitor them and report on their compliance

Positive and negative requirements provide the offender with an opportunity to demonstrate his intention to mend his ways. Examples of positive requirements include making reparation, attending courses, and being tested for drugs. Negative requirements include avoiding licensed premises, not

associating with named persons and keeping out of specific areas.

Progress is reviewed periodically – usually every four to eight weeks during the deferment – with a written review from the supervisor provided at each review. Only if the offender receives a report from the supervisor at the end of the period of deferment to the effect that they have complied with both the positive and negative requirements and kept out of trouble, would they be likely to receive a non-custodial sentence.

Stage four – community sentence

An offender successfully completing a period of deferment is considered for a non-custodial sentence, in the form of a community order. This enables the court to control the offender's behaviour over a further specific period. During this time, their conduct is kept under review by periodic meetings in court before the judge with regular written reviews from probation and IOM.

At any stage of the process described above, the offender may be brought back and resentenced after revocation of the community order if they fail to comply with the court's requirements or if they commit any further offence.

Evaluation

The evaluation is ongoing. The evaluation is being led by the Probation Service.

Overall impact

This is currently unknown. The assessment of impact and success of the initiative is under review currently as this is a new process. No data is available to assess at this time.

Learning

The meeting to begin the process to record learning and outline changes moving forward is being held in March with partners. There is no information to adequately inform on this basis at this time.

From observations of those offenders currently on the scheme (five offenders) the early indications are that it is working well to divert those persons away from reoffending. It is an intensive scheme. It involves extensive work by probation and police to make the scheme work and to keep those

offenders on track in the early weeks. Some statistics are likely to be available by the end of this financial year 2022/23.

We have some challenges around the number of offenders who are now, through word of mouth, wanting to be considered for the scheme. This is proving a resourcing challenge in our IOM team.

Assessment of individuals for suitability to be included on the scheme is lengthy. This often involves three visits to prison to speak to offenders about the scheme and how it works.

This scheme works well in conjunction with our TIC process and assists in encouraging offenders to 'clean the slate'.

In Bedfordshire, we were inspected in 2021 in relation to our management of offenders. We were graded 'outstanding' for our rehabilitation programme and our working together to prevent reoffending in these types of offenders.

Best available evidence

Currently, the [crime reduction toolkit](#) does not include any best-available evidence on an intervention similar to the prolific burglar intensive programme.

It does include the best-available evidence on [drug courts](#). These are used as an alternative to normal court processes and are designed to reduce reoffending.

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Tags

Crime reduction