

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT CLEVELAND POLICE

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HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT-SUMMARY

For many years Hartlepool has suffered from high levels of deprivation and crime, particularly house burglary. In 2001 the Cleveland Police area had the third highest rates of house burglary in Britain.

Criminological research has overwhelmingly demonstrated that a large percentage of crime is committed by a small percentage of offenders. Local analysis confirmed this and further indicated that a very high proportion of offenders are known to be heroin users.

Hartlepool Dordrecht was established in 2001 and consisted of a police officer, probation officer, drugs nurse and support workers working as one, co-located team. Through analysis, the most prolific house burglars are identified and targeted by the team. Recruitment to the scheme is by way of a community rehabilitation order or post custody licence, each with a specific Dordrecht condition. Failure to comply with the conditions of the scheme result in swift judicial action.

Supervision is much more intense than a normal order or licence and through the police, offenders are closely monitored within the community. In return offenders are offered assistance and encouraged to address their behaviour and those factors that cause their offending. Drug treatment is immediately available and accommodation, education and employment issues are also addressed.

Many participants of the scheme have been able to radically change their offending behaviour as a result of their involvement. Between July 2001 and December 2003, 84 offenders had been involved with the scheme. Between them they had 3,808 convictions. Of these individuals, 36 successfully completed their Dordrecht condition and two thirds had still not re-offended six months after completion.

Conversely, 31 had their orders breached at court and 32 were recalled to custody (some were breached more than once). Whilst this was a failure for the individuals concerned it was a success for the scheme as they were unable to commit further offences whilst in custody.

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

CONTENTS

SCANNING	PAGE 5
ANALYSIS	PAGE 6
RESPONSE	PAGE 9
ASSESSMENT	PAGE 13
APPENDICES	PAGE 15

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

SCANNING

Hartlepool is a mainly urban area, situated in the north east of England, with a population of around 91,000. Nine of its seventeen wards are within the 10% of most deprived wards in England and Wales. Indeed 2 wards are in the most deprived 1% and a further two are in the most deprived 2%. In 2000 research showed that 37.4% of residents lived in low income households compared to 24.2% in England and Wales. Levels of unemployment were found to be equally high with the job demand rate being 32.3% compared to 13.2% nationally.

For many years Hartlepool has suffered from high levels of crime, with dwelling house burglary being particularly problematic. Despite significant reductions during 1998/1999, the level of house burglary in 2000/2001 was 36.7 per 1000 households, substantially higher than the national average of 20.2 per 1000 population. Compared to other partnership areas Hartlepool was ranked as 368 out of 376 and 33rd out of another 32 most similar areas. Not surprisingly, consultation with members of the public, following the audit, identified dwelling house burglary as the key issue of concern for the Community Safety Partnership.

Although the true cost of crime is not known, a recent study by the Home office entitled "The economic and social costs of crime" estimated the average cost of a dwelling house burglary to be £2300. During 2000-2001 there were 1,405 offences of dwelling house burglary in Hartlepool, which equates to a total cost of over £3million.

As a result of such high levels of both deprivation and crime, Hartlepool receives both Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) and New Deal For Communities Funding (NDC)

In 1999, as part of the government's Crime Reduction Programme, Hartlepool Community Safety Partnership achieved a reduction of 23% on levels of house burglary in one of the wards with the highest levels of both deprivation and crime. This project had experimented with working with prolific offenders in the area, as well as more traditional crime prevention methods, and whilst success was limited, the seeds were sewn for a much more intensive project.

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

ANALYSIS

Location

Levels of dwelling house burglary in Hartlepool are undoubtedly high when compared to other areas. They also vary across the town, from being below the national average in some wards, to more than twice the national average in others. In 2001 the Cleveland Police area had the third highest rate of house burglary per 100,000 households in Britain. In the same year the British Crime Survey demonstrated that house burglary is a particular problem in the 88 most deprived areas, with residents in these areas being twice as likely to be burgled as those living elsewhere. It is generally accepted that areas of socio-economic disadvantage tend to be co-terminous with areas that display higher rates of dwelling house burglary and parts of Hartlepool provide a good example of this.

The nine most deprived wards in Hartlepool, which represent the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) area, account for 75% of house burglaries within the town. In the smaller New Deal for Communities (NDC) area, that forms part of the NRF area, baseline information revealed that levels of house burglary were 71% above the town average and 195% above the national average. Intelligence in Hartlepool suggests that the majority of offenders commit crime within very close proximity to where they live.

Victim

Analysis conducted by the police in Hartlepool confirmed that the majority of offences of dwelling house burglary shared the following characteristics:

- In areas with high levels of social deprivation
- Usually in terraced streets
- Often with rear yards leading onto alleyways
- Few security features

Analysis of 'modus operandi' revealed that entry is normally unskilled, via insecure windows or doors or using bodily force. The most frequently targeted property is cash, handbags, jewelry and other easily concealable goods left on display.

The audit of crime and disorder, conducted on behalf of the Hartlepool Community Safety Partnership in 2001, revealed that those at most risk of becoming victims of any crime are aged between 17 and 24 years. The risk, however, varies according to age and sex, with 42% of all crimes against males over 65 years and 41% of all crimes against females of the same age being house burglary.

Offender

Criminological research has overwhelmingly illustrated that a large percentage of crime is committed by a small percentage of offenders. The government has suggested that;

“burglary rates at local authority area level can be very volatile; they can increase considerably, for example, when prolific offenders are released from custody and fall again once they are apprehended”.

Analysis by police in Hartlepool has confirmed that this is true locally. In 2000-2001, the audit of crime and disorder showed that 860 people were subject of 3679 arrests. It further revealed that almost 43%

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

of all arrests in Hartlepool involved 17-24 year olds. In three of the most deprived wards, between 21% and 26% of all males aged 15-24 years old had been arrested during that year. Whilst tackling youth offending has been high on the government agenda for some time, schemes tackling the issue of adult offending have been lacking.

Between 1st January 1998 and 31st October 2000, Hartlepool suffered 4243 dwelling house burglaries. Only 10%, however, were detected. Further analysis showed that 47 offenders were responsible for 39% of those detected. Nationally in 1999 only 15% of all dwelling house burglaries were detected and it is acknowledged that offending rates are probably much higher than what is known.

Drugs and offending

Intelligence relating to burglary suspects indicates that a very high percentage of offenders are known drug users, with heroin being the drug most often used. Research conducted locally as part of a university project revealed that 80% of acquisitive crime in Hartlepool was carried out in order to fund drug misuse.

In the first year of the operation of an arrest referral scheme in Hartlepool, in 2000-2001, over 200 people were seen after coming into police custody. 38% were aged 20-24 years, 20% were aged 25-29 years and 17% were aged 30-34 years. Therefore 75% were in the age range 20-34 years. Of all those seen, 80% admitted heroin use, with benefits and crime being cited as the two main means of funding. The majority of participants admitted to spending up to £300 per week on their addiction, with 12% admitting spending between £300 and £600 per week.

Analysis by Teesside Probation service of their caseload in September 2000 revealed the following:

- In 56% of cases drugs were identified as an issue by offenders
- 80% of those were not receiving treatment
- In 50% of cases unemployment was identified as an issue
- Offenders in Hartlepool are 6 times more likely to be unemployed than the public
- In 24% of cases homelessness was identified as an issue

Burnley Dordrecht

In the summer of 2000, Sgt Beeston attended a Home Office conference, where mention was made of an initiative in Burnley, based upon a Dutch scheme, which was working with prolific offenders. The scheme had undergone some initial evaluation by Ken Pease and Sylvia Chenery from Huddersfield University, who in 2000 declared that the only two approaches to dealing with offenders were:

- **Changing their motivation to commit crime, or**
- **Rendering them unable to commit crime**

As the cycle of offending/prison/offending has been evident for some years, it would seem logical that unless the former method be adopted, and at least tried, levels of crime would remain high indefinitely.

The evaluation reported the following key findings and would form the basic ethos of the Hartlepool Dordrecht scheme:

“While in principle simple, the philosophy of Dordrecht has profound implications, and stands alone amongst current penal initiatives in its consistency with the government's philosophy of toughness on both crime and the causes of crime. It combines benefits to prolific offenders in helping with the

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

problems that sustain them in crime, and benefits to the community in ensuring that those who persist in crime, despite such help are promptly removed from the community. It incorporates in practical form, a partnership between two agencies with a poor past record of co-operation”.

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

RESPONSE

Build up

Despite numerous previous initiatives based on target hardening to both streets and individual properties, levels of house burglary in Hartlepool were still high in comparison to most other areas. In true problem oriented approach it was time to start tackling the offender and the causes of offending.

In the summer of 2000, Sgt Beeston, the Police district crime manager and an assistant chief probation officer from Teesside Probation service, made a visit to Burnley. All three were sold on the principles of the Dordrecht initiative, which involved a police officer and probation officer jointly supervising prolific offenders and at the same time offering them help and support to address the issues that caused them to offend. Burnley had experienced a 20% reduction in dwelling house burglary since the scheme had started, along with reductions in overall crime.

The Proposal

With the police and probation service committed to the idea of a prolific offender project, Sgt Beeston approached other potential partners, with a view to gaining their support. One of the perceived weaknesses of the Burnley Dordrecht scheme was the ad-hoc arrangement with other partners, relying on good will and personal relationships for many services. It was agreed in Hartlepool, that the critical success factor of the scheme would be the drugs treatment element. The general provision of such services in Hartlepool was poor with lengthy waiting lists and therefore it was decided that it should be an integral part of the initiative. It was also felt that outreach support should be provided in addition to the statutory element in order to give offenders the best chance of success on the scheme.

Support was quickly gained from Tees Health Authority, to provide a drugs nurse to the project. Stonham Housing, a local hostel accommodation provider agreed to assist with emergency housing needs and to provide two outreach support workers to the team. Two local employment organisations (Action Team For Jobs and Hartlepool Offenders Project Endeavour) agreed to work with any participants of the project. In fact the support for the proposal was overwhelming, with all agencies agreeing that this kind of project was crucial to reducing crime within the town.

With overwhelming support for the scheme, the proposal was completed and required funding of £227,00 for a 12month period. This would cover the following costs:

- One full time police officer
- One full time probation officer
- One full time drugs nurse
- Two full time outreach support workers
- Weekly GP prescribing session
- Medication, testing and dispensing costs
- Admin, travel etc...
- Evaluation by local university

Following an unsuccessful bid to the Home Office Crime reduction Programme, the project was able to commence, thanks to funding through the neighborhood Renewal Fund (NRF). A joint arrangement with New Deal For Communities (NDC) was successfully pursued for 2002/2003 onwards.

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

Hartlepool “Dordrecht” is born.

July 2001 marked the start of the scheme in Hartlepool. With office accommodation provided within the probation service building, an experienced detective constable, with 26yrs service began working with an experienced probation officer. For the first time in Hartlepool the two agencies were working together with a common goal, crime reduction. Soon after, the drugs nurse and support workers were recruited and by January 2002 the team of five was in place.

Working with prolific offenders was a new concept in Hartlepool, particularly for the Police and much work was needed in raising awareness of the project. Several briefings were delivered to uniform and CID, as well as individual briefings to custody officers, senior management team, and local intelligence officers. A series of presentation was also delivered to local Magistrates as they needed to know about the scheme, in order to inform their decisions when faced with a potential Dordrecht target. The Chair of the Magistrates gave his full support to the project. Similar awareness raising was conducted within Teesside Probation Service, Addictive Behaviour Service and Stonham Housing. Hartlepool Community Safety Partnership was regularly updated as to the development and implementation of the scheme.

Once the scheme was up and running, Sgt Beeston began to pursue the joint funding that would be needed for the following year, through New Deal For Communities. This involved attending numerous resident meetings, open meetings and workshops, trying to convince members of the public that investing in the scheme was good use of NDC funds. After overcoming much animosity from residents towards offenders, Sgt Beeston managed to convince them of the worth of the project, on the grounds that success, either in terms of rehabilitation or recall to prison would result in a reduction in offending.

Aims and objectives

The overarching aim has and always will be the reduction of crime, particularly house burglary within Hartlepool.

The objective is to change the offending behaviour of those involved in the scheme by addressing those factors which cause them to offend.

Targeting

Through analysis conducted by the local police analyst, looking at the previous two years, a list was generated of the most prolific offenders residing within Hartlepool across a range of crime categories. The criteria for selection onto the target list for the project were as follows:

- 3 or more convictions for house burglary in the previous two years
 - OR
- Police intelligence to suggest that they are actively committing house burglary

The latter criteria was aimed at incorporating those known offenders who had not been convicted in the recent past due to serving lengthy custodial sentences. This analysis generated a target list of around 50 offenders, enabling the work of the project to be focused on those with whom successful intervention would reap the greatest benefit in terms of crime reduction. This list would focus the initial work of the project with the intention of recruiting these individuals to the scheme.

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

Entry onto the scheme is primarily by one of two routes:

- Community Rehabilitation Order at court (formerly a probation order)
- Post custody licence

In both instances a condition of compliance is written into the order or licence. In the case of a court order the condition must be with the agreement of the offender. This has not proven to be an issue as the offender in question is often facing a prison sentence should he/she decline to participate in the Dordrecht scheme. Initially offenders recruited to the scheme on licence had to agree to the Dordrecht condition being included. This, however, was changed at an early stage as some offenders would not agree, due to the increased level of supervision involved. The Dordrecht condition on a licence is now compulsory for anyone targeted by the scheme. Despite some protestations from prisoners, the majority of participants quickly realise the benefits of the scheme and engage with staff.

Those targeted by the scheme are visited in prison some months before their release. The scheme is explained to them and issues that they may have on release begin to be addressed. If they have received drug treatment in prison, arrangements are made for it to continue upon their release. This has been a huge difficulty in the past and offenders have often left prison drug free and within days, have reverted back to their old ways due to a lack of appropriate treatment services.

It was acknowledged from the start that any offender subject to the target list would be entitled to the support of the scheme on a voluntary basis if they wished it. This was to eradicate the possibility of offenders committing further crime in order to access the benefits of the scheme. In reality this has not happened.

The “carrot and stick” theory

Offenders who are targeted by Dordrecht and recruited to the scheme are subject of intense supervision and are closely monitored with regard to their behaviour. They are required to keep four appointments per week, initially, and this includes home visits by the police officer on the team. As time goes by appointments may reduce, depending on the progress of the offender. This element of supervision is in excess of the national standards required by probation and much greater than with other community sentences. Individuals on the scheme are made known to district uniform and CID officers via briefings and an internal web site to enable monitoring and surveillance to take place within the community. Again, this can be varied according to the individual's response to the scheme and their known propensity for offending. Any intelligence in relation to participants is automatically forwarded to the team via the police officer and the offender is confronted about any adverse behaviour during their supervision appointments.

In return the team look at the criminogenic factors behind each individuals offending behaviour and attempt to address them. These factors are usually drugs, accommodation, education and employment. As analysis showed, drug misuse is more often than not, the driving force behind the commission of crime and therefore must always be the first priority. This approach is absolutely crucial in solving the problem of offending in the longer term. Participants are required to fulfill appointments with agencies deemed necessary to aid their rehabilitation, for example the drugs nurse. The two outreach support workers within the team work with the offenders in trying to find suitable accommodation if they need it. This has been found to be a vital part of rehabilitation. Participants often do not have stable homes,

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

particularly on leaving prison, and often find themselves sleeping rough or moving from one friend's house to another. Supported accommodation is available through Stonham Housing and is often a first step for offenders leaving custody.

The outreach workers also assist with claiming benefits, liaising with education and employment organisations as well as offering more general support where offenders who are undergoing drug treatment find difficulty in coping with "normal" life in the community. More recently progress has been made around constructive use of leisure time. Participants have in the past found that their lives have revolved around committing crime and using drugs and have suddenly found that they have nothing to do. A local sports and community centre have agreed to allow Dordrecht participants to use their facilities, on a supervised basis, initially. Several are now using the fitness suite on a regular basis and it is hoped that football and basketball will soon be organised along with some outdoor activities. A couple of participants are also taking part in a libraries and museums information technology based project.

Individuals who engage with the Dordrecht staff and accept the help that is offered, often change their behaviour. However, it was recognised from the outset, that when dealing with such prolific offenders many will not engage and will resist changing their behaviour. Those who do not comply with the scheme, either by failing to keep appointments or continuing with offending are swiftly dealt with. Breach proceedings are instigated, wherever possible, for those on community sentences and those who are on post custody licences are recalled to prison. Therefore compliance results in a reduction in offending and non compliance often results in custody.

Adapting along the way

As with any new initiative, Dordrecht has seen some changes in the two and a half years that it has been operating:

- The roles of police officer and probation officer were mainstreamed in 2002
- An offender supervisor replaced the probation officer in 2003
- The condition placed on a licence is now compulsory as opposed to "with consent"
- A dedicated team manager was recruited to the scheme in 2002.
- Victim offender mediation was attempted in 2002 but failed due to the unwillingness of victims to be involved .

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

ASSESSMENT

Levels of house burglary

Whilst levels of house burglary across the town fell at the end of 2001/2002, they rose again the following year. This was reflected in the NRF area, whilst the NDC area has experienced a rise in consecutive years. Indeed, as can be seen from the graph at Appendix 1, levels have fluctuated over recent years, following repeated reductions in the early to mid nineties. Indications for the current year are that there will be a reduction of approximately 16%.

Offenders involved with Dordrecht

Between July 2001 and December 2003, 84 offenders had been involved with the Dordrecht scheme. Between them they had 3,808 convictions, (an average of 45 each), 472 custodial sentences, (an average of 5.6 each) and 465 convictions for house burglary (an average of 5.5 each).

Of those 84 participants, 25 were subject of a court order and 54 were subject of a post custody licence, 3 had both and two were on parole licences. 79 of the total had problems with illicit drugs, primarily heroin, which were addressed through a variety of treatments. Routine drug testing is carried out as part of the programme and many participants gave clean swabs on a regular basis.

During their time on the scheme, usually between 6 and 12 months, 18 accessed supported accommodation and 5 obtained housing tenancies. 14 participants accessed Training and education and, incredibly, 9 were able to gain full time employment.

Of the 84 participants to date, 31 had their orders breached through the court, 32 were recalled to custody and 36 successfully completed the scheme. Two thirds of those who completed had not re-offended 6 months after completion. This equates to 29% of the total and 67% of those who complete the scheme.

A full evaluation study is being conducted by Teesside University and will be available in early 2005. Interim reports have been positive about the scheme. Below are some comments from the 2nd interim report executive summary:

“Even those participants who raised criticisms (about a lack of choice and intensity of the scheme) supervened these with more favourable commentary about the overall value of the project in helping them desist from crime”

“Whilst many of the aspects of Dordrecht were reported positively, the ‘fast track’ drug treatment it offered emerged as particularly significant for participants”.

“The Dordrecht project successfully targets individuals who are responsible for a significant proportion of criminal activity in the town”>

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

Oasys

This is an assessment tool recently introduced by the National Probation Service to measure the risk that offenders pose within the community. It is conducted at the commencement and completion of any Dordrecht orders and licenses and if the score has reduced at the end, this equates to a reduction in risk of offending. Six Dordrecht participants have been subject to it so far and in all but one case there has been a reduction in the final score

Cost benefits

Dordrecht has so far cost £180,000 per year to operate. It has worked with around 40 offenders per year, giving a unit cost of £4500 per offender. That equates to less than the estimated cost of 2 house burglaries (£2300 each based on the Home Office study). Whilst offenders on the scheme have an average of 5.5 convictions for house burglary it is acknowledged that their actual offending will be much higher as detection rates are particularly low. Indeed, one participant stated that the offences for which he had been convicted represented between 5 and 10% of what he had committed. The governments National Treatment Agency estimates that an average heroin addict will spend around £17,000 per year on drugs, which equates to almost four times the unit cost of Dordrecht.

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

APPENDICES

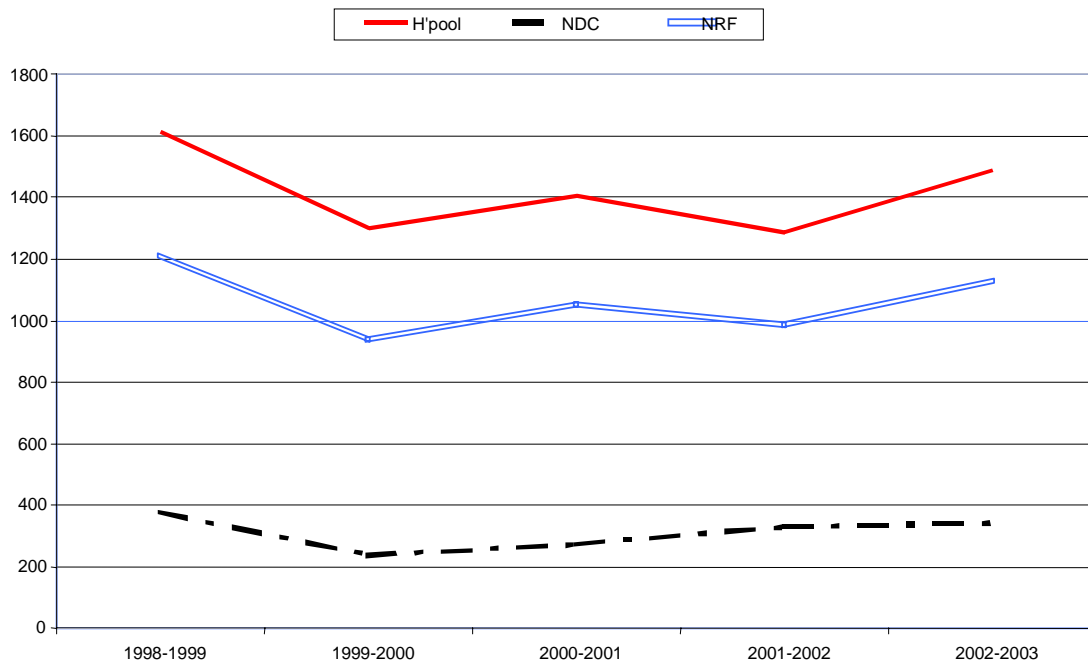
- Appendix 1 Charts showing house burglary levels in Hartlepool
- Appendix 2 Chart showing Teesside Probation service caseload September 2000
- Appendix 3 Comments from participants taken from evaluation report
- Appendix 4 Case Study 1
- Appendix 5 Case Study 2
- Appendix 6 Newspaper report from Safer Hartlepool

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

APPENDIX 1

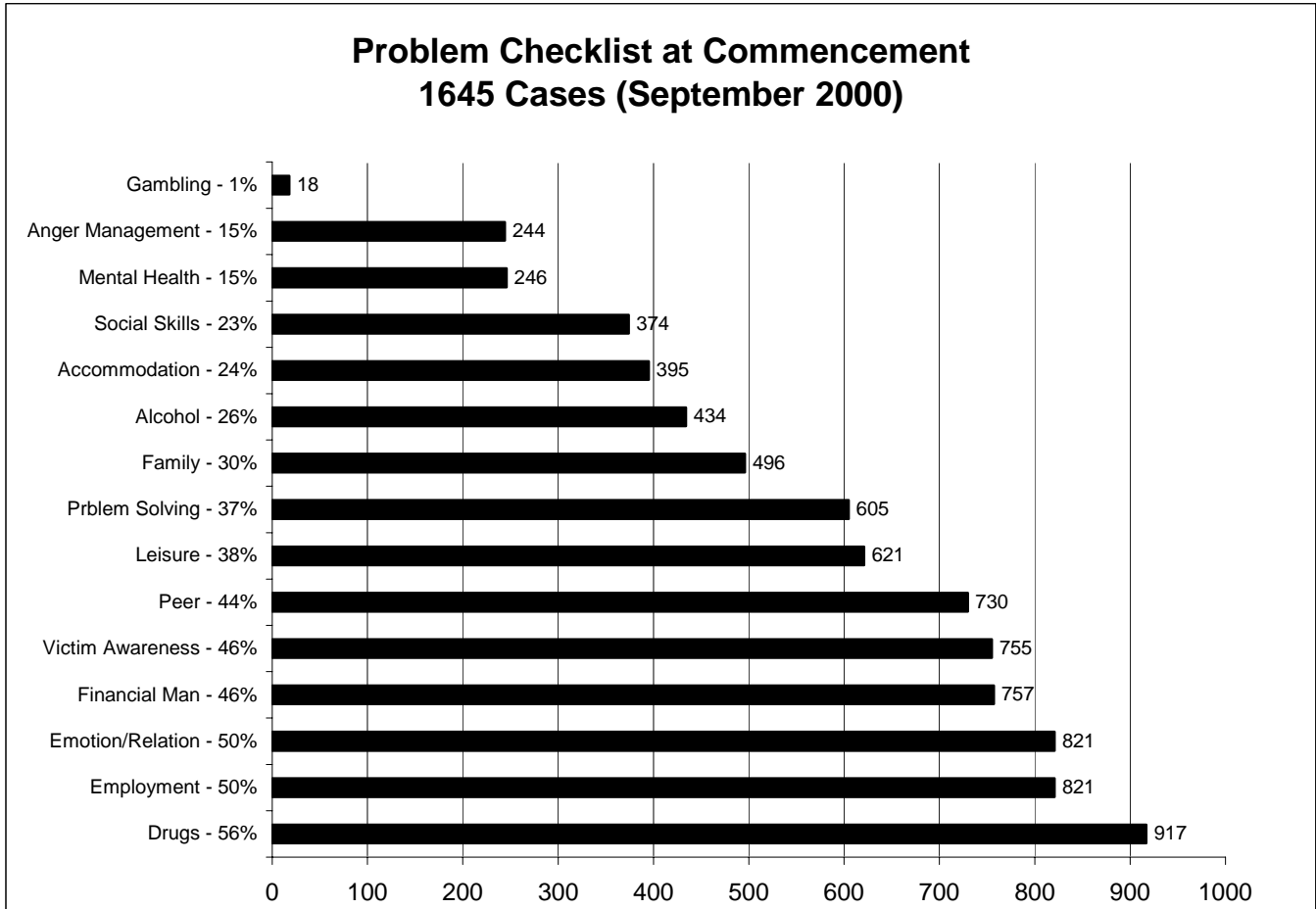
YEAR	HARTLEPOOL (Actual numbers)	NDC (Actual numbers)	NRF (Actual Numbers)
1998/1999	1613	378	1214
1999/2000	1301	237	936
200/2001	1405	274	1054
2001/2002	1286	330	986
2002/2003	1488	343	1130

Dwelling House Burglary in Hartlepool



HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

APPENDIX 2



HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

APPENDIX 3

"It's giving you the sort of chance in life you really haven't had....I'd rather do the Dordrecht, done the life of crime and that.. it is working. It does work, do you know what I mean?...Bright and cheerful, that's what it is now. More positive about things".

"I've never really had any support. Nowt. Only drugs clinics where they've put me on methadone and if you louse up-if there's too many positives-you're going to get booted off and that's it. But this, they're genuine. I found that refreshing...when I used to get sent to jail they just banged you up, do your time and come out again but this, they really talk to you and really listen to you. Before it was just a sentence, then don't bother no more... but this, eight years later, I was astonished. There was nothing like this before. I didn't know this existed.... I can't see myself in jail. I can't see myself offending. I've worn that tee-shirt too long. I want to get free of this heroin lark... I've been trying to come off it for ten years".

"It did help me. I mean, I've been clean for nearly two years now. Yeah, it's just made me take a good look at myself. Like having to come in and report four times a week was a major deterrent to not use your drugs. You needed to be clean; otherwise you could have got took back to court...and back to jail. I always wanted to be clean you know, I wanted to. They had everything in place to stop me from falling. I thought it as quite good, actually. I enjoyed it.. Its definitely, definitely put me back on the right track, basically: learnt me how you live normally again".

"I've got a different life now, completely different life....I'm part of the family now. For the last seven years, I haven't been. For the last five months, since I've been drug free, they've got their son back".

"They're good, very good, because they've done all sorts for me. I mean, I haven't got a job or my own place yet, but since I've been here they've been caring. They've helped me. Everything that's been an issue for me they've sorted it out. They're there for any type of problem and they're there to help you. They do the best job, I think".

"Yes, I am positive about it. They have helped us. I didn't think it was going to be like this when I got put on it. I couldn't believe it, but they are genuine".

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

APPENDIX 4

DORDRECHT CASE STUDY 1(referred to as John)

BEFORE

John began offending at the age of 11yrs, committing minor thefts such as stealing scrap and roof lead. He grew up on a local estate and became involved with much older youths of 14-15yrs. He began abusing solvents and gas and stopped attending school at the age of about 13yrs, as he had no interest in it. As a result he was sent to an approved school. His first conviction was at the age of 11yrs for robbery and his offending continued throughout his youth. His first taste of imprisonment came at the age of 15yrs and he has served 13 custodial sentences since. He is now 33yrs old and has never been out of custody for more than a few months, sometimes-even days he tells me.

Solvent abuse progressed to using cannabis in his mid to late teens, funded by committing shop burglaries and resulting in him beginning to commit dwelling house burglaries. By his early twenties he had begun to take heroin, though he claims not to have been addicted to it for the first 18 months. He tells me that he hated it the first time he tried but did it again some time later and enjoyed it. He talks with venom about the male who first gave it to him and states that he's hated it ever since becoming addicted. Once addicted to heroin he admits to also taking ecstasy and speed, which resulted in a habit of £100 per day, which was funded through crime, mainly shop theft. He tells me that he has only committed about 6 dwelling house burglaries but police records show that he has been convicted of 110 separate criminal offences in total. His drug abuse and offending behaviour impacted heavily on his home life and relationships. Although supported by his parents when not in prison, a long-standing relationship with a girlfriend ended with his last prison sentence, 3 and a half years for house burglary.

AFTER

In February 2003 he was released from prison on licence with a Dordrecht condition attached to it. He tells me that he had made a conscious decision, before leaving custody that he wanted to change his lifestyle but was worried that he would revert to taking heroin. On previous prison releases he admitted to using heroin immediately. Although he didn't mind being subject to a Dordrecht condition, which has more intensive supervision than a normal licence, he didn't think that it would make any difference to him. He had previously been on both probation orders and licences, which he stated had no effect whatsoever.

Drug free on release from prison, he was able to continue on a methadone programme and gave regular clean swabs, proving that he had not taken any illicit drugs on top. He states that he is drug free to this day and is adamant that he will not return to it. Fortunately, he retained the support of his family and was able to live with his mother. He successfully completed his Dordrecht condition at the end of August and he has now been out of prison for longer than he has ever been since the age of 15yrs. Since being with Dordrecht he has only been charged with an offence of drunk and disorderly. He is adamant that he has not committed any criminal offences.

Although he can't put his finger on what it was that made him change his behaviour,

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

He attributes Dordrecht with making him see sense and start to turn his life around. He got on well with the team members and appreciated the support that they gave. He tells me that all he wants to do now is to find the right girl, settle down and have a few kids!

HARTLEPOOL DORDRECHT

APPENDIX 5

Dordrecht case Study (referred to as David)

Before

David began to commit offences, mainly shoplifting at the age of about 10years old. He was first convicted at the age of 11yrs and was briefly taken into care as a result, but managed to complete his schooling without further offending upon leaving the care system.

Without achieving any qualifications he worked for only 6 months after leaving school, and has never worked since. David began to offend again at the age of 17 or 18yrs, around the same time as he started to smoke dope. This progressed to amphetamines and ultimately heroin, resulting in a habit of £50 to £80 per day, which was funded completely through crime. He first went to prison at the age of 18years and has served 10 custodial sentences since, ranging from a few months to five years. Most were imposed for offences of house burglary but also included shop theft and robbery. David is now 37years old and told me that he has never spent more than a couple of months outside of prison since he was 18yrs, until recently. As a result of his offending behaviour and drug taking he was forced to leave his parent's home and was shunned by his family. He told me that for the past eight years, when not in prison, he has either slept on friend's floors or in derelict buildings.

Towards the end of 2002 David was released from prison yet again and by early February 2003 was at court facing another custodial sentence for house burglary. This time, however, he was given the option of a community rehabilitation order with a Dordrecht condition attached to it. He admits agreeing to Dordrecht simply as a means of avoiding prison.

After

Within days of the order beginning he began a methadone programme and is now drug free. This was the turning point for David as he told me that he no longer had the need to offend. Through Dordrecht, he has accessed supported accommodation and for the first time in eight years he has a home. Staff now feel that he no longer needs the intensive support that they provide and are looking to move him on to independent accommodation. He is currently undertaking various basic training courses and hopes to find work in the building trade. This is the first time he has accessed any kind of training since leaving school 21yrs ago. He completed his Dordrecht condition in August 2003.

David speaks almost fondly of the Dordrecht staff, stating that they have been really good to him and helped him in lots of ways. He's now back in with his family and can visit them whenever he wants.

Most importantly of all David has not been arrested since he began the Dordrecht scheme eight months ago! When I asked him if he ever saw himself returning to crime, he said:

"Oh no not now, I wouldn't have thought. Do you know it doesn't even enter my head now....I don't even think about it."

When I asked him what he thought the future held for him, he replied:

"I'm hoping to get a job, move on somewhere from here. That's all I really want, to get a job and have a future, you know."