

# PROLIFIC OFFENDER MANAGEMENT PROJECT UPDATE



The objective of the Prolific Offender Management (POM) pilot project is to reduce the amount of crime committed by a small number of prolific offenders in six pilot communities. The project brings together resources from enforcement agencies (police, corrections and Crown) with a range of health and social service partners. More intensive supervision and timely intervention with a small group of prolific offenders is intended to reduce their criminal behaviour, whether that is through treatment or incarceration. The approach is being tested in Surrey, Kamloops, Nanaimo, Prince George, Williams Lake and the Capital Regional District (Victoria).

The goal of the approach is to:

- reduce offending by these chronic offenders;
- reduce the crime rate in pilot communities attributable to these offenders;
- get better information to Crown and the court to support sentencing decisions;
- improve compliance with sentencing conditions and treatment;
- improve coordination and cost effectiveness of services;
- improve outcomes for offenders (health, housing, and other).

This report provides early results of the POM pilot and preliminary information about the 190 offenders who were chosen in the six pilot locations. Information about these offenders provides an early glimpse into some of the issues driving their criminal behaviour and more about their criminal history.

In assessing how we're doing, we are focused on the individual offenders. Are they offending less frequently? Have we reduced their negative impact on the community? We expect that if we are successful with many of these offenders, we will see reduced crime rates, especially in the smaller pilot communities where a higher proportion of the city's prolific offenders are part of the project.

We will continue to develop informal reports on the progress of the pilot, and will look to the formal evaluation for more comprehensive information (autumn 2010).

## Our Partners

It is important to note that the early successes we are seeing on the project are due to the dedication and involvement of our partners, who are proactive in providing advice and services to manage offenders. The collaborative effort in this project has been outstanding and each team member's dedication to success is inspiring. For many, this is the first significant collaboration between justice, health and social service staff, and the benefits of collaboration flow beyond this project.

We wish to acknowledge the leadership of Community Corrections and our partners:

- Ministry of Housing and Social Development
- Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Ministry of Attorney General
- Ministry of Solicitor General
- Health authorities (mental health and addiction services)
- Adult Forensic Psychiatric Services
- BC Housing
- Correctional Service of Canada
- Public Prosecution Service of Canada
- RCMP
- Municipal police (CRD)

*This report provides early results of the Prolific Offender Management (POM) pilot...*

## The Offenders

Of the 190 offenders included in the project, 93% are adult males, 4% are adult women, and 3% are male youth. They range in age from 15 to 58 years.

The main criteria used to select offenders were:

- a history of frequent offending,
- information that they are criminally active, and
- an assessment that they are at medium to high risk to re-offend.

## Type and Number of Offences

Early analysis of the cohort tells us that the main types of offences committed by these offenders are property offences and breaches of conditions. Almost all the offenders (98%) have at least one property crime conviction, and the vast majority has at least one breach of a court order. For violent offences, 78% have at least one offence, with the highest category being common assault, at 56%. Lastly, 58% have at least one drug offence.

On average, the offenders have 54 convictions in B.C. (those recorded by provincial corrections). More detailed data will be available in the evaluation.

## Age at First Conviction

Most of these offenders began offending between the ages of 12 and 20, but a surprising number began offending in adulthood: 24% were first convicted when they were 20 years or older. The average age at first conviction is 18.

## In Custody or Under Order

In December 2008, 85% of the offenders in the POM cohorts were in custody or under some kind of supervision such as probation, parole, bail or conditional sentence (42% in custody and 43% under supervision).

*“The average age at first conviction is 18.”*

Location	Number of Offenders	Average # of B.C. Convictions
Kamloops	54	47
Nanaimo	33	52
Prince George	25	60
Surrey	37	53
Victoria	29	64
Williams Lake	12	52
Total/Average	190	54

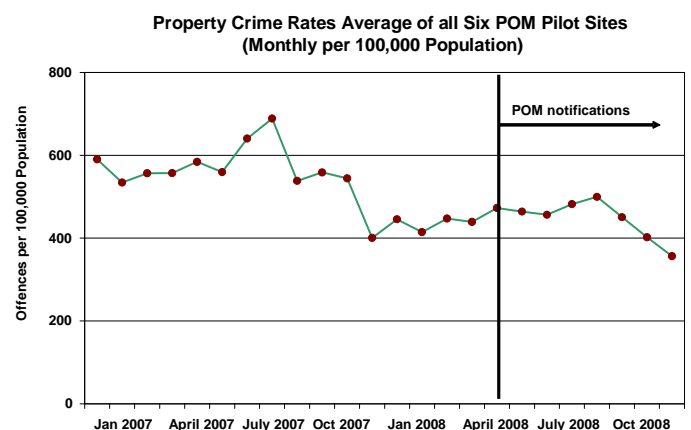
*Note: 190 offenders as of Aug 08*

## Corrections Risk Assessment

B.C. Corrections has assessed 98% of these offenders as being medium to high risk to reoffend. A high proportion of offenders have risk and need factors in the following areas: companions (96%); substance abuse (89%); suitable housing (88%); family relationships (88%); behavioral emotional stability (84%); consistent employment (77%); and job skills (68%).

## Community Crime Rates

It is too early to draw conclusions about the impact of the project on community crime rates. It is encouraging, however, that crime rates continue to drop in all six communities. There has been a downward trend in all of B.C. over the last two years, and we will be analysing whether crime rates in the pilot communities drop more than the rest of the province over the two-year span of the pilot.



## Results to Date

### Immediate Effect on Some Offenders

An early sample of offenders indicates over a third of those not in custody have responded to the program by decreasing their criminal activity and many are actively engaged with the services offered by the POM team partner agencies.

### Increased Police Attention

Police are devoting more time and attention to these offenders; a random sample shows a significant increase in police contacts. For some, this has a real deterrent effect. For others who continue to offend, it means being able to provide better information to the court to support bail and sentencing decisions.

### Improved Information

Enforcement agencies are working collaboratively to provide Crown Counsel and the Court with the information needed to support decisions. They are using an improved information package which is flagged for police on their electronic records system (PRIME).

### Increased Communication

There has been a substantial increase in communication with offenders and, most importantly, proactive efforts by team members to support change. For example, probation officers and police are spending more time with offenders to explain their impact on the community, and to impress upon them that they need to make changes. Team members who provide services for income support, housing, forensics, and mental health and addictions are ready to work with each offender in a proactive way. In the past, individual offenders would be expected to apply to each agency, something that would rarely happen.

It is also made clear to offenders that police are paying them extra attention, and that Crown will take a strong position if they continue to offend.

### Partnerships

Those involved have said that the partnerships being developed have benefited other areas of their work, and in some locations, these partnerships will form the foundation for future crime prevention and crime reduction initiatives.

---

## Challenges

It can be difficult for health and social services to engage offenders and to have the right services available at the right time for this challenging group.

Effective participation in the partnership requires the dedication of time and effort from each agency.

---

## Early Success Stories

### Offender A ~ Making a real improvement

The offender has been active in crime for the past seven years, with 27 previous criminal convictions for property crime, assault, and breaching court orders. He has a long history of non-compliance with court ordered conditions. He would not report to his probation appointments and continued to associate with known criminals.

The offender was notified while in custody that he had been identified as a prolific offender in the project. During a meeting with representatives from the team, the offender indicated that he was willing to seek help for the factors that were causing him to commit crime, the lack of suitable housing being a major challenge for him. The probation officer was able to secure him a spot in a housing program operated by the John Howard Society.

Upon release from custody, the offender began to attend a violence prevention program operated by B.C. Corrections. The police made regular curfew checks to ensure he was complying with his release conditions and to support his compliance efforts.

For the first time in years, this offender has attended all of his scheduled meetings with police and his probation officer. He has reconnected with extended family members and recently completed all of the requirements of the violence prevention program. He has not had any new criminal charges in the past six months.

### Offender B – Continuing Criminal Behaviour

This offender is a drug addict and has been active in property crime and mail and identity theft for over 10 years. He has influence with several young people in the community and has been known to offer them drugs in exchange for stolen personal identification and mail. Since 2000, he has had over 120 interactions with police.

The offender was notified about being identified as a prolific offender and about the POM program while he was on supervised bail. One of the restrictions under that bail order was that he not be in possession of credit cards, cheques, or other people's IDs. This offender had little intention of abiding by the condition imposed by the Court – three weeks after being notified that he had been selected as a prolific offender, he was arrested in possession of stolen mail. The following week the offender committed two more frauds on local businesses and the police began conducting surveillance. As a result, he was caught committing another fraud and was arrested with stolen income tax cheques. A search of his residence uncovered hundreds of pieces of stolen mail, credit cards and ID.

During this time, police were working closely with the Prolific Offender Management team to make sure that a comprehensive information package was available for the court at the sentencing hearing. Crown counsel was able to provide the judge with information related to his criminal history, volume of police contacts, past engagement with programs while in custody and the community, as well as some background on his battle with drug addiction.

The accused appeared in court in January 2009, entered guilty pleas to 12 charges, and received a

custodial sentence of 39 months. In the past, the longest sentence he had received was nine months of custody for a break and enter offence. This offender has had a substantial negative impact on local businesses and victims. The integrated approach used in the POM pilot ensured that the court had a clear picture of the full impact of this offender on the community, and the court responded with a strong sentence.

---

## Contact

Criminal Justice Reform Secretariat

PO Box 9228 Stn Prov Govt.

Victoria B.C. V8W 9J1

Phone: 250 387-6036

Fax: 250 356-6552

E-mail [CriminalJusticeReform@gov.bc.ca](mailto:CriminalJusticeReform@gov.bc.ca)

Website: [www.criminaljusticereform.gov.bc.ca/](http://www.criminaljusticereform.gov.bc.ca/)

Toll-free information is on our website.