

Integrated Offender Management in West Midlands LCJB



From Possibility...

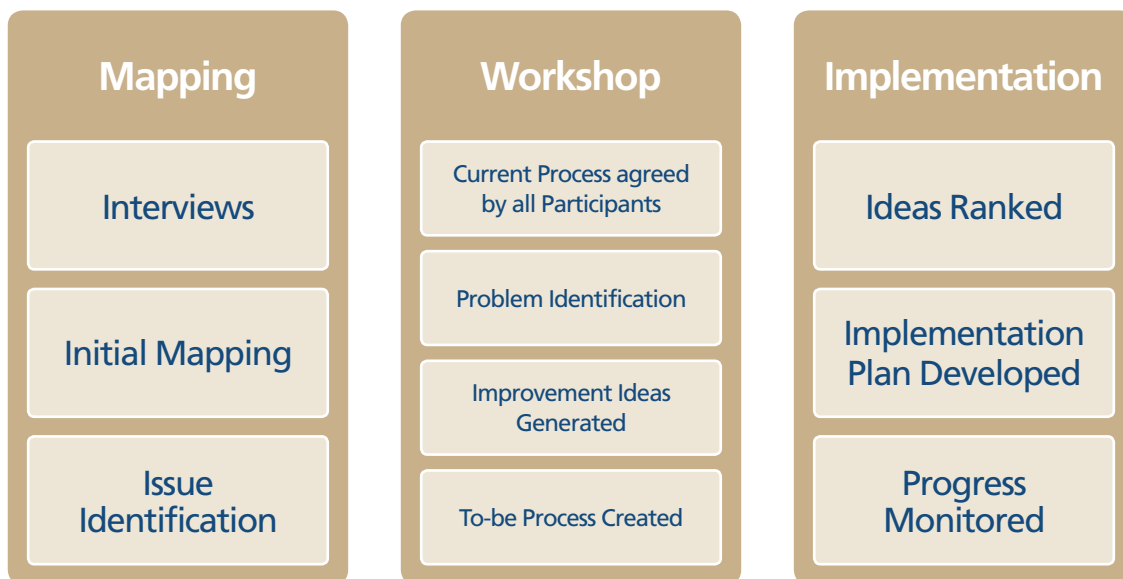
In February of 2009 Ad Esse Consulting was engaged by the West Midlands Local Criminal Justice Board (LCJB) to facilitate in the development and delivery of an Integrated Offender Management (IOM) model. The West Midlands is a national pioneer site for IOM. Through IOM, the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice aim to remove overlaps and address gaps between existing offender management programmes. The West Midlands approach stretches the boundaries of IOM to include diversionary work with youth offenders through to the targeted management of Prolific and other Priority Offenders (PPOs). The execution of this vision requires inter-agency cooperation extending across: Police; Probation; Prison; CPS; HMCS; YOS; Schools; Health Care Providers; Housing Providers; DWP; and multiple third sector agencies. The very considerable challenge facing the West Midlands LCJB is how to give practical effect to this high level vision in the context of real and persistent efficiency pressures in the criminal justice sector.

The challenge is compounded by the need to accommodate significant variation in offender cohorts and operational focuses between Boroughs while maintaining a coherent, systematic and efficient overall approach. A Business Process Improvement (BPI) methodology was selected to deliver this complex package, with initial work focused on the PPO programme in the West Midlands Boroughs of Walsall and Wolverhampton. A team consisting of West Midland Police and Probation officers, lead by an Ad Esse consultant was formed. A key deliverable in addition to the validation of the methodology was the transfer of BPI skills to the team, who will lead, with Ad Esse support, the roll out of the approach across other areas going forward.

OUR APPROACH

The project had a three stage approach: information gathering; workshop; and implementation. First the team interviewed operational staff from: police operational command units; probation offices; prisons; housing agencies; drug treatment agencies; and third sector agencies. The information gathered was used to develop a process map of the journey a PPO takes, clearly identifying who provides what service at what stage. The initial interview stage enabled the team to develop a picture of where there were potential gaps in the services provided. It also provided a key insight into the challenges of inter-agency working. It is of particular note that the practitioners we spoke to did not initially feel that there were many improvements that could be made short of increasing the resources being allocated to the program.

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An important part of this initial phase was transferring knowledge to the team on how to map a complex, multi-agency process. The management of PPOs had not previously been thought of a process, and it was claimed during the information gathering process that it was impossible to map the journey of an offender as there are too many variables. Although each offender will differ in their specific requirements, and case management will necessarily entail the delivery of different services, there was a consistent high level process being followed. Working together the team divided offenders into different cohorts and was able to provide a valuable framework in which the activities of the agencies could be mapped.

Having created a series of detailed process maps the next step was to analyse them, looking for process waste (duplication, over processing, high error rates) and gaps in the management of offenders. In order to prioritise the identified improvement opportunities it was necessary to conduct data analysis (using Pareto techniques) to understand where the greatest problems lay. The outcome of BPI initiatives is strongly linked to understanding where the greatest potential for improvement lies, and focusing energy there. The output of this analysis provided an agenda for a process improvement workshop that was focused on tackling and solving those issues that were having the greatest impact.

A workshop was held over two days that included front line practitioners from all the agencies involved in the PPO scheme. It was the first time they had all been together, and the first time many of them had met. The workshop participants verified the processes mapped, and together identified the major problems and potential solutions. Central to the Ad Esse methodology is the principle that improvements are best generated by those that do the work, rather than imposed from outside. This approach generates both a higher quality of solution and the buy-in necessary to effect sustainable change. Part of the skills transfer to internal IOM team was a practical understanding of change management.

The workshop generated over 20 actionable items for implementation. The third phase of the project was to develop an implementation plan that ensured all the improvements identified were fully captured. Where possible ownership for the implementation was taken by participants from the workshop. The team took responsibility for the escalation of other suggestions and overall management of the implementation, ensuring that the improvements were being effectively embedded.

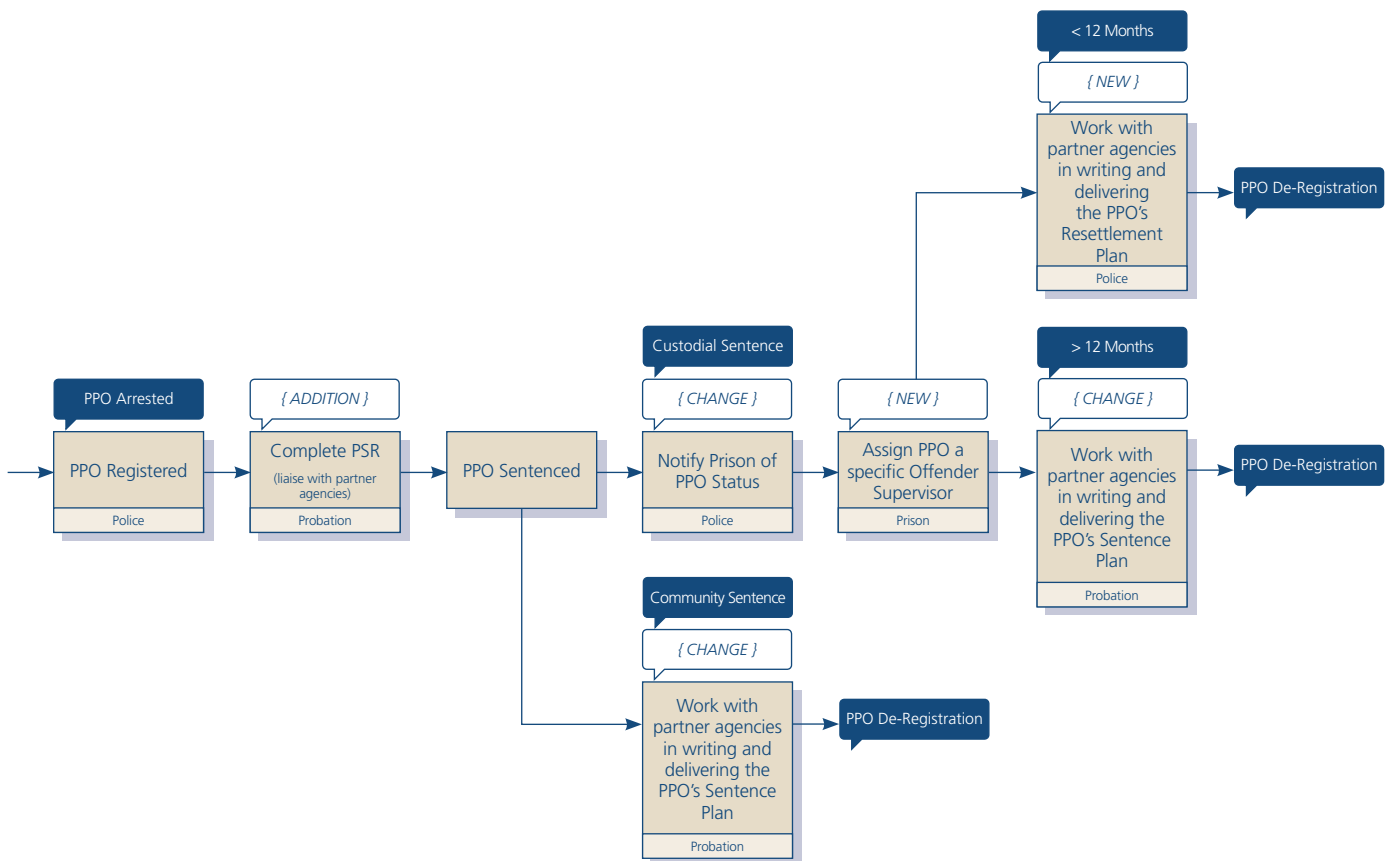
To Actuality...

Delivering end to end management of PPOs...

Of the 20 improvement actions raised the most significant issue identified and addressed was the lack of active management and engagement with offenders serving prison sentences of 12 months or less - the cohort most likely to reoffend. One of the innovations developed during the workshop was full inter-agency case planning and management for offenders on short term sentences. This involved Police, Probation, Prison and Drug Services working together to actively intervene with the offender quickly after their sentencing.

This initiative has also integrated prison officers into the PPO scheme, addressing a large gap in inter-agency communication and co-operation. The operational reality before the project was that some partners were effectively working in silos. This led to multiple agencies attempting to provide the same services to offenders, or being unaware of the full range of services available to the offender they could draw upon. Through bringing the agencies together to focus on process improvement the project was not only able to significantly improve the quality of the programme, it was also able to identify large efficiency gains. One of the more significant areas of waste identified by the team was duplication. There was duplication in intelligence gathering and in the services being offered to the offender, such as housing. Part of the generation of new processes for the scheme was a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. The improved communication flows between the different agencies acted to both increase the quality of the service and efficiency. Staff estimated time savings upwards of half a day per week in relation to housing issues alone.

The diagram below shows at a high level the additions and changes made to lifecycle management of a PPO offender.



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THE BENEFITS

The payoff of this approach is clearly demonstrated by the speed of implementation. Within two weeks of the workshop a scheme for managing PPOs on short prison sentences had been introduced, driven by the front line staff involved. Within two months over 50% of this cohort were receiving improved services. There has also been significant resource released by removing duplication and time wasted because of poor communication flows. This resource has been directed towards increasing the number of offenders under management by 15% as well as improving the quality of the services delivered. The benefits of the approach can be broken down into qualitative and quantitative categories. Some key benefits under each category are listed below.

Qualitative benefits:

- Providing case management of PPOs not subject to statutory supervision gets to grips with the high cost 'revolving door' of recurrent short custodial sentences and increases the likelihood of successful intervention.
- Better implementation of the PPO premium plan in Prisons through integrating Prisons explicitly into the PPO management process. (Potential benefits of breaking down the current Silo approach to PPO management within Prisons was seen by operational staff to be significant).
- Better inter-agency information sharing, reducing the chances of multiple 'stories' being told to different agencies and minimising duplication in information gathering, with corresponding improvements in police intelligence.
- Higher quality interventions, through maximising the skills and services of the 3rd sector eg. mentoring programs.

Quantifiable benefits:

- Clarification and co-ordination of roles and responsibilities will significantly reduce duplication of certain tasks e.g. Housing and drug scripts - both in excess of ½ day per week.
- Significant saving in time spent on communication with Prison services.
- Estimated saving of 3 days per month in travel time through keeping PPOs in local prison for Police. A higher saving for Probation.
- Multi-agency visits to the Offender delivers significant efficiency gains in lowering communication costs and aligning inter-agency case management at an early stage.
- Leveraging full value from 3rd Sector service providers reduces pressure on police resource to provide key support eg organising DWP benefits, training and employment opportunities.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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