

2019 Herman Goldstein Award for Excellence in Problem–Orientated Policing Submission

Scanning:

The project has sought to address how the Force can identify perpetrators who pose the highest likelihood of committing harm against its vulnerable communities. Identified perpetrators are then assigned to a dedicated perpetrator team entitled the HHPU in order to tackle their criminality through bespoke risk management plans.

National increases in the identification and detection of high harm offences against people, in particular the incremental addition of registered sex offenders presented a challenge for Officers to manage their risk within a policing landscape constrained by austerity. It was clear that the Force needed to do something different to focus its effort on these perpetrators so as to improve its ability to protect vulnerable victims of crime.

Analysis:

The project identified that much work was being completed to identify and safeguard vulnerable victims; additionally a shift towards Neighbourhood policing had seen a welcomed increase in target hardening of locations and implementation of civil orders to deter offending. Both of these conditions had elegantly evolved into a multi-agency response to problem solving, however the same had not been replicated in the identification and management of perpetrators who cause the harm. The project developed a methodology, working with partners, to overcome this problem through the development of a predictive algorithm and referral process to identify these perpetrators.

Response:

The project recognised that the ability to identify perpetrators to prevent high harm offences was a problem shared with partner agencies and the communities that were affected by the criminality.

A solution to the problem was found in the design of a predictive algorithm supplemented by multi-agency referrals and professional judgement to identify perpetrators most likely to commit such offences. This enabled bespoke problem solving plans to be designed which would address the motivation and opportunity of the offender to commit high harm offences.

Assessment:

In order to measure the results of the HHPU an academic evaluation is underway with the University of Birmingham. The successes are illustrated through significant reductions in the Cost of Crime and level of Harm caused, as quantified by the Cambridge Crime Harm Index. The implementation of the project has overcome some challenges in the engagement of officers, as expected during a change programme, however these provide valuable lessons learnt for other Forces who are looking to adopt a similar response to identify high harm perpetrators and coordinate a successful multi-agency targeted problem solving approach.

Number of words: 392

Scanning:

The project has sought to address how the Force can identify perpetrators who pose the highest likelihood of committing harm against its vulnerable communities. Concurrently, it also looked to increase the Force's capability and capacity to target these perpetrators through the establishment of a new department and an investment in tactical training.

This vision has coincided with a shift in Policing focus over the past few years from property related and serious acquisitive crime towards protecting people whilst using a Threat, Harm, Risk approach. In part this shift was attributed to constrained resources however it was also in response to greater understanding and acknowledgement of more complex investigations involving children such as Sexual and Criminal Exploitation.

The categories of High Harm include *serious sexual offences, domestic abuse, hate crime, child abuse and serious violent crime*; by the very nature of the crime type the victims of these offences tend to be vulnerable and are perpetrated against on more than one occasion. This was heavily the experience of Officers working in safeguarding departments who often investigated multiple offences of the same dyad where the perpetrator continued to offend against the victim. Although the creation of MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference) and other multi-agency meetings assisted in the partner information sharing of high risk cases, there remained a culture of victim-led 'target hardening' through extensive safeguarding measures which often failed due to victim withdrawal. The consequences of this problem resulted in rising workloads due to repeat victimisation, victims continued to suffer repeat harm through further offences and the cost of crime through investigation and safeguarding continued to rise.

In September 2017 the concept of addressing this problem began to take form through the establishment of a High Harm Perpetrator Unit (HHPU) which was piloted on one of the three Force divisions. The Unit was formed through the amalgamation of the Violent & Sex Offenders Register team (ViSOR) and the Integrated Offender Management team (IOM). The merging of the two teams was supported through a specialist training programme resulting in a team of omni-competent officers equipped to manage different categories of perpetrators beyond registered sex offenders and prolific offenders.

The purpose of the pilot was to achieve increased capability and capacity to deal with the existing IOM and ViSOR offenders whilst also embedding a new process to identify High Harm perpetrators outside of the traditional cohorts and identification processes; the identification was achieved through the design of a predictive algorithm. This change was welcomed by partnership stakeholders such as MARAC which discusses High Risk domestic abuse cases in order to facilitate information sharing to increase public safety. The HHPU provided MARAC and other agencies with a referral process in which Police would target high harm perpetrators, which would in turn, through effective management of the perpetrator, reduce the risk and management required by those agencies.

The algorithm was developed using the Force's 'data warehouse'; this included NicheRMS (crime investigation records management system) and CADS (Computer Aided Dispatch – call logs). This 'data' identifies all perpetrators who are listed as 'suspect' or 'charged' who have committed offences within North Surrey (the Pilot division). This data is then added into an algorithm which assesses the probability of an individual reoffending for any given offence, it is measured using the COPAS score (a derivative from OGRS¹ (the Offender Group Reconviction Scale)). This predictive sum is then multiplied against its core component, the Cambridge Crime Harm Index² (CHI) which has weighted all identified High Harm offences at an increment of 1.5 in order to give them an augmented Harm Score. The algorithm also produces a 'Threat, Harm, Risk Score'; this ranks offenders based on the probability of re-offending using the COPAS rate calculation. The benefit of the algorithm is that it serves as a reliable measure and common currency to quantify the true cost of crime by the harm it causes, thereby empowering the Force and stakeholders to attribute resources to tackling offenders most likely to cause the greatest level of harm.

The extent of problem was measured by identifying the High Harm perpetrators and ascertaining what measures were already in place to tackle their ability to commit crime. A threshold of 100 perpetrators to

¹ The OGRS scale is a predictor of reoffending based on static risks such as age, gender and criminal history.

² The CHI is a measurement of crime rates in which crimes are weighted based on how much "harm" they cause.

review from the algorithm was chosen; the rationale for this number being that it was a manageable level for the size of the team and additionally the final quarter of this cohort showed a much lower and slower change in the COPAS rate which suggested that beyond 100 the harm level was likely to be less significant. These 'Top 100' perpetrators are part of a dynamic list which is refreshed fortnightly; there has been very little change in the cohort which provides stability and assurance that the algorithm is a reliable measure of identified harm.

The approximate make-up of the 'Top 100' is as follows:

- **1/3** were in prison; these are discussed at the referral meeting one month prior to their release to ensure that where appropriate, a risk management plan is in place.
- **1/3** were currently managed through the existing IOM or MAPPA process. Of interest, the MAPPA managed offenders appearing in the Top 100 were scored at either 'High Risk' or 'Very High Risk' on ARMS³; thereby providing additional assurance that the algorithm is identifying the correct perpetrators.
- **1/3** were perpetrators who were not being managed through any formal process and are classed as part of the eligible cohort for HHPU intervention. These are assessed by the HHPU using some professional judgement and identification as to whether the team can add value; such as monitoring bail conditions, court orders, referring them for support services or other Police tactics such as surveillance, call data analysis or providing them with a voluntary GPS tag to demonstrate compliance on the HHPU scheme.

The HHPU referral meeting is held fortnightly to discuss the 'Top 100' perpetrators (not all 100 are discussed as per the make-up above; those discussed include new entrants onto the list, the Top 10 and those which have had a significant increase in their Harm Score since the previous data refresh) in addition to those referred in by MARAC, MAPPA, Neighbourhoods or Investigation teams. The referral meeting is Chaired by the HHPU Detective Inspector and attendees include the IOM Police Sergeant, ViSOR Detective Sergeant, MARAC Co-ordinator and relevant investigation teams; the invitation is also extended to Probation and CRC. A discussion list is prepared and reviewed by the panel attendees thereby ensuring that the results of the algorithm and nominations through other risk matrixes are complimented by professional judgement. The purpose of the discussion is to devise a multi-agency action plan to tackle the perpetrator's motivation and opportunity to commit an offence. Perpetrators which require additional scrutiny or require additional resources to tackle the risk they pose are taken to the Division's Tactical Tasking & Coordination Group (TTCG). Examples for such cases would be where monitoring of a perpetrator's DVPO or bail conditions are beyond the operational duties of the HHPU; or where an Intelligence package on the perpetrator is required to identify further victims at risk.

Analysis:

In tackling the problem of identifying the perpetrators who commit the highest harm in the community it is of crucial importance to ensure that a multi-agency and multi-dimensional approach is adopted.

The benefit of amalgamating the IOM team with the ViSOR team provided an invaluable opportunity in sharing skills and knowledge regarding different approaches to tackling perpetrators and their motivation for committing crime. Both practitioners and academics would certainly agree that the perpetrator profile of a sex offender would be different to that of a distraction burglar. However, all rely upon the opportunity to offend and no more is this exposed as when the victim is vulnerable.

Identifying perpetrators through the HHPU referral process which balances the use of the algorithm, multi-agency referrals and professional judgment enabled the Force to develop a cohort of high harm perpetrators which could be targeted by the dedicated HHPU team. The problem itself could be broken down into a Routine Activity Theory⁴, previously used to tackle traditional IOM prolific priority offender cohorts. The theory suggests that a person may choose to offend if they have the motivation to attack a

³ Active Risk Management Systems - this assesses the risk on statutory sex offenders managed by either police or probation as the lead agency.

⁴ Cohen L. and Felson M. (1979) Social Change and Crime Rate Trends: A Routine Activity Approach

target, they have the right kind of target to attack, and finally if the target does not have a capable guardian. Although the theory was based upon research into mainly acquisitive crime, irrespective of the crime type and profile of the perpetrator; this theory can be applied to all.

By identifying and understanding these distinct three elements which contribute to an offence taking place, it is also possible to determine options for reducing crime either by providing protection or by removing the motivation or target.

The Problem Analysis Triangle (PAT) was used to understand the conditions producing the problem. In simplest form, for a crime to occur, a perpetrator and a suitable target must come together (in a specific location) without an effective deterrent being present. Put simply, there are three core ingredients to a crime occurring as illustrated in the figure below:

Fig 1: Problem Analysis Triangle



Once the perpetrator had been adopted onto the HHPU cohort, professional discussion and research of previous offending would identify what side of the PAT required an intensive response.

It was acknowledged that there were already in place, alternative responses to the problem however they did not look at the PAT in its entirety. As previously mentioned, safeguarding teams had developed a number of comprehensive risk assessments (both local and national) whilst working with partner agencies to protect victims from remaining vulnerable to re-victimisation. In addition, both investigators and neighbourhood officers looked at approaches to 'target harden' locations in order to prevent crime whilst also reducing the likelihood of displacement.

An impressive example of this has been the Force's commitment and vigour in issuing Domestic Violence Prevention Notices (DVPNs) which if granted by the Court become Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs).⁵ Additional examples can be found to prevent other criminality such as the widespread use of Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs) which are used to disrupt an adult's association with a child or young person. The Notice warns the adult that they have no permission to associate, contact or communicate with the child, and if they do so then they may be arrested and prosecuted. Recent noteworthy (National) cases⁶ however illustrate some of the issues arising from only tackling a partial part of the problem, although the data relates to Child Abduction cases, the sentiments can be applied to almost any offence where the perpetrator exerts coercive control over a victim:

- Victims often feel that they are in a 'legitimate relationship' with the perpetrator; they may continue to return to the perpetrator and not support a prosecution.

⁵ DVPOs provide short-term protection to the victim where there has been no charge or bail conditions. The process is designed to give breathing space to the victims by granting a temporary respite from the perpetrator and thereby allowing them to access support services without interference. The victim does not have to attend Court for a DVPO to be granted which also assists by removing responsibility from the victim for taking action against the perpetrator.

⁶ www.childabduction.org.uk

- It is not clear what proportion of perpetrators who are issued with a CAWN comply with them and cease contact with the child (the Force has not targeted compliance of these CAWNs or DVPNs/DVPOs until the establishment of the HHPU).
- In some cases, perpetrators prosecuted for breaching a CAWN go on to start up a similar abusive relationship with another child; thereby merely causing displacement of the problem.
- The consequences of failing to disrupt inappropriate relationships can be very serious. In one recent case from another Force, a 17 year old child died from a drugs overdose supplied by her perpetrator who had twice been served with a CAWN in an attempt to prevent him from seeing her.

The above cautionary notes highlight the requirement for the problem orientated response to preventing high harm crime to be equally focused upon the perpetrator rather than merely the victim or the location in isolation.

Response:

The benefit of having a dedicated HHPU with omni-competent Officers meant that bespoke problem solving plans could be designed to meet the 'needs' of each perpetrator. These plans are created at the HHPU referral meeting and reviewed fortnightly; they complement the work being completed by other teams such as the Neighbourhood and Investigation departments who are more focused on the location/environmental aspect of the crime and that of victim safeguarding.

The implementation of an algorithm to complement professional judgment was adopted as a reliable and consistent identifier of perpetrators. This option was chosen as research suggests that although there is immense value in professional judgment, the decision-maker's opinion is typically less accurate than actuarial assessment⁷. The objective of this approach being that judgment becomes informed rather than intuitive and consequently the quality of decision-making will improve which will increase the ability to target perpetrators who are commit the highest level of harm.

A number of practical methods have been utilised to target perpetrators placed onto the HHPU cohort, this is a mixed methodology to directly target the perpetrators motivation and opportunity to commit an offence. Case studies relating to the problem solving approach are outlined below:

- (i) **Case 3536795** – 16 year old male High Risk domestic violence offender who had repeatedly raped his 14 year old girlfriend. This case was highlighted through the algorithm and was simultaneously referred in from MARAC; the perpetrator was immediately adopted by the HHPU. Extensive research across Police systems revealed that he was a repeat domestic abuse offender who had perpetrated across other forces, demonstrating an escalation from his violent offences and breach of restraining orders towards the most serious sexual offending. The management of this perpetrator has exemplified the benefits of having an 'owner' to drive partnership offender management in reducing harm to the victim and community. The HHPU held professional meetings with the Youth Offending Team and Children's Services in order to agree a joint management plan with the Investigating Officer. The management of the perpetrator enabled the Officer to focus on the investigation and provided capacity to deliver excellent victim care whilst also managing other high harm offences on their workload. This joined up approach was critical in instigating the fast time arrest and remand of the perpetrator. Throughout the process, the HHPU continued to manage the risk that the perpetrator posed such as opposing bail applications, liaising with the prison to obtain behaviour reports, assisting the Officer in completing paperwork for a Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO), gathering prison intelligence to identify any risks to the victim and applying for a Community Behaviour Order (CBO) upon until his custodial sentence.
- (ii) **Case N10721**– was referred to HHPU by MARAC as a High Risk domestic abuse perpetrator who escaped conviction on a number of occasions due to the victim not supporting a

⁷ Kahneman 2012

prosecution. The 'IOM' skillset of the HHPU quickly identified through their work in completing the resettlement pathways assessment that the perpetrator's offending was triggered by his alcoholism. This enabled officers to identify the route of the problem and make the appropriate referrals to partner agencies so as to address the perpetrator's issues. In addition, the HHPU attended probation meetings, visited the perpetrator by making weekly unannounced home visits, worked with the neighbours to encourage them to call the Police if they overheard disturbances and kept an overview regarding the improvement in the perpetrator's lifestyle. Since commencement of this bespoke and intrusive HHPU work, the perpetrator has not committed any further offences.

Each HHPU perpetrator adopted onto the cohort is discussed at the HHPU referral meeting, not only is this the forum for problem solving but it is also used to devise an exit strategy of withdrawing involvement with the perpetrator when a Police response is no longer required. Each case is unique, however this withdrawal may be due to a lengthy prison sentence, a determination that another lead agency is more suitable (i.e. mental health), that there has been a substantial stable period of non-offending or that the perpetrator is failing to engage with HHPU Officers and consequently the focus of targeting would shift from rehabilitation to arrest and conviction.

Engagement with stakeholders from the onset was recognised to be critical to the success of the project; high harm perpetrators largely have triggers for offending that transcend beyond just policing powers and require a multi-agency problem solving response. Key stakeholders were identified as Probation, CRC (Community Rehabilitation Company) and the OPCC (Officer for the Police Crime Commissioner). In addition, multi-agency risk management meeting groups such as MARAC and MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) were also engaged with.

The stakeholders and multi-agency groups have remained both a supportive and critical-friend to the project. The success of this relationship is undoubtedly due to early transparent engagement and a clear scope of the project being set out at the onset. The project did not attempt to change the existing good practice or divert from the national guidance for the management of risk associated with these offenders, rather so working with stakeholders, it aimed to merely enhance the ability to identify and target the risk sooner.

In order to achieve successful implementation it was also crucial to engage the teams in the journey. This did present some challenges, particularly within the organizational culture that tends to exist amongst specialist teams. The benefits of having longstanding experienced officers in post provided a wealth of experience and stability for the team throughout the change project, however some reluctance to change also became evident amongst both Officers and Supervisors. The key tipping point to stabilize the teams was the buy-in from the supervisors whose engagement improved as the processes began to embed; the increased capacity and capability generated not only reduced individual workloads but it allowed Officers to become more proactive in how they targeted high harm perpetrators which consequently produced more satisfying results.

Assessment:

In order to measure the results of the HHPU Pilot four objectives were set prior to the project commencement. These were subsequently reflected upon during an interim review 7 months into the project and again after 12 months as part of a final review. The objectives were as follows:

1. Improve the identification of perpetrators who pose the greatest likelihood of high harm in our communities;

This objective has been achieved through the design of a predictive algorithm which is also complimented by professional judgement and multi-agency referrals to form a HHPU referral process which audits all information provided by panel members, the decisions made and the rationale for those decisions.

This improved methodology to identify perpetrators has highlighted a number of cases where there would be no statutory management (such as MARAC or MAPPA) yet their identification and interventions imposed by the HHPU has resulted in effective targeting of the perpetrator.

2. Increase the capacity and capability of existing IOM and ViSOR teams to deal with increasing demand without the need for additional resource;

Local and national data shows that ViSOR (MOSOVO) workloads continue to rise (approximately 8% per year) and they will continue to do so as further investment in technology and investigation training, result in a higher identification of offences and offenders. In the absence of an uplift in officers, greater resilience was required in order to ensure that safeguarding and service to the public are not compromised.

A sustainable way to achieve this was through the amalgamation of ViSOR and IOM into the HHPU, not only has this increased the capacity of the combined team since its inception but it has also blended experience. The IOM has traditionally been a pro-active tool to target perpetrators and reduce reoffending whereas the strength of the ViSOR team has predominantly been that of safeguarding. Together, this has achieved a well-balanced team who have combined their strengths through sharing skills and experience; thereby increasing their capability through focused work on those at the highest risk of harm and reoffending.

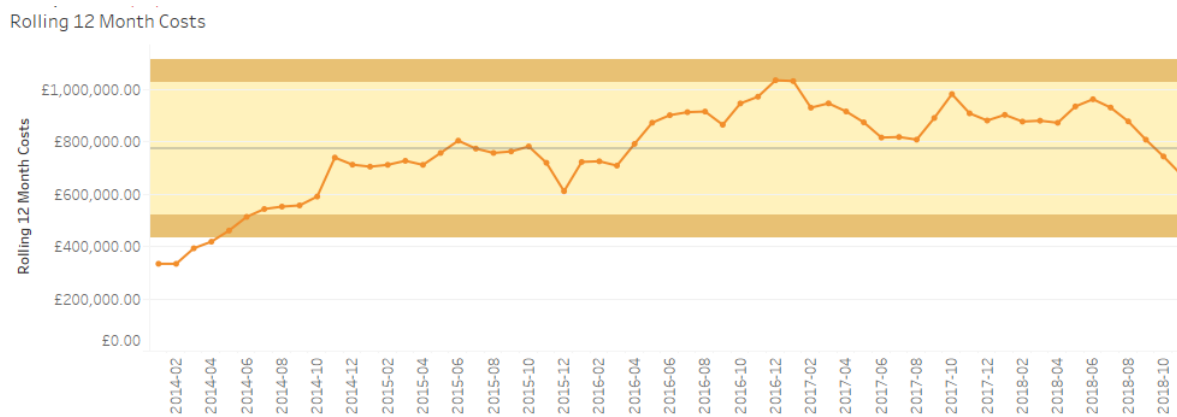
The ViSOR and IOM team are co-located in one office as part of the HHPU; this has both physically and mentally removed barriers to achieving joined-up working and sharing of best practices. Lessons learnt to overcome some of the organisational culture challenges earlier in the implementation process can be utilised in the replication of the HHPU in the other divisions.

Both Probation and CRC Officers are also able to hot-desk in the office which provides the opportunity for deeper partnership working and understanding of each agencies issues which need to be supported and overcome. Examples of such being where Probation may need assistance to complete an ARMS assessment due to a short-term staffing issue; this assists in building relationships across agencies and produces greater cooperation when tackling the problems associated with the perpetrators.

3. Establish a robust set of performance criteria that will measure the impact and effectiveness of the team;

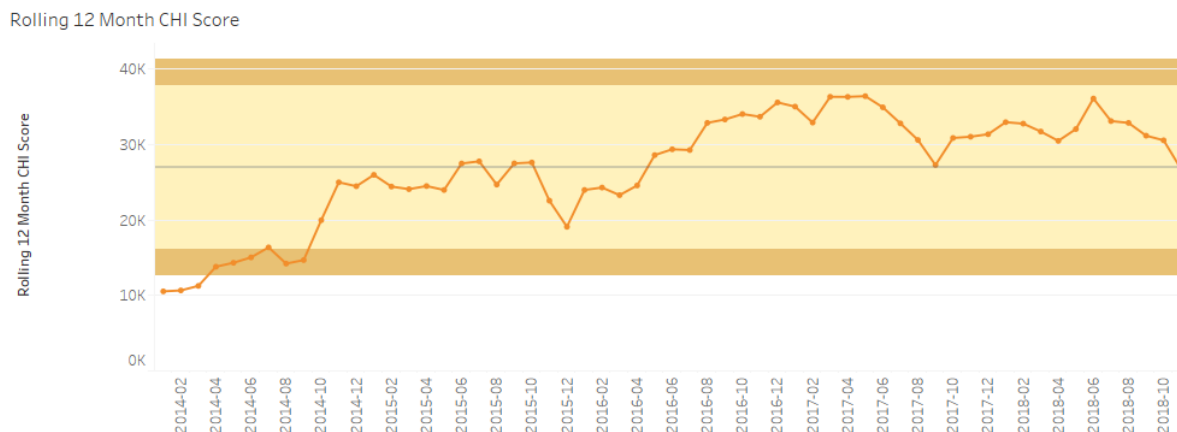
The Cost of Crime Index and the Cambridge Crime Harm Index are the primary tools that enable the progress of the cohort to be tracked. The chart below demonstrates the impact that has been achieved over a six month period since implementation of the HHPU in relation to the cost of crime attributable to managed perpetrators within the cohort. To translate these results into financial representation, the rolling year cost of crime for the cohort in June 2018 was £964,028.00, this has reduced to £745,100.00 in October 2018. Projected figures for November 2019 are that this figure has reduced further to £675,964.00.

Chart 1: Performance results by Cost of Crime



The CHI used below also follows a similar trend to the cost of crime, the results show that some strong reductions in harm continue to be achieved. In June 2018 the CHI level for the cohort was 36,087, in October 2018 this has significantly reduced to 30,553. Projected figures for November 2019 are that this figure has reduced further to 26,727.

Chart 2: Performance results by CHI



The 'Top 100' is used to chart the reduction in reoffending of those identified and also, the reduction or lack of increase in the risk that they pose. It is evident that since September 2017, those with the highest rate of reoffending and risk of harm are being effectively targeted.

The performance of the HHPU is tracked against the other two divisions for ViSOR which remain 'control' areas. Since the implementation of the Pilot, the HHPU has out-performed East and West in relation to proactive tactics to target perpetrators. Although no research has yet been conducted to confirm that the results have been caused by the implementation of the HHPU, the correlation is most likely due to the benefits of the project which have effectively identified and targeted those committing the highest harm offences.

4. Ensure that all operational procedures are compliant or congruent with existing offender management and practice;

From the outset, it has been a clear aim of the Pilot to ensure that existing good practice is not dismantled or neglected; but rather that national guidance is maintained throughout. The Pilot has sought to enhance upon agreed processes whilst also dynamically improving upon how we can protect our communities from those that pose the greatest risk of harm.

Since the introduction of the Pilot, there has been no change in the process regarding the escalation of risk through MAPPA and partnership activity continues to reduce reoffending through IOM procedures. The Pilot merely enhances the ability to identify risk sooner through fortnightly reviews of perpetrators highlighted through the algorithm or professional referrals.

Moving forward, on the national MAPPA agenda there is much discussion regarding the future of reactive management of low risk sex offenders given their increasing numbers and rising ViSOR workloads. This concern was shared by CC Michelle Skeer (NPCC MOSOVO lead) who considered the Pilot to be innovative and commented that there is a requirement for new ways to effectively and proportionately manage these offenders. Deputy CC John Stratford (NPCC IOM Lead) has also recognised the good practice embedded by the HHPU and has arranged for his IOM to consider this approach. This project is the first nationally to target perpetrators using an algorithm to inform how a dedicated perpetrator team can target offenders based upon the prioritisation of harm.

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Agency and Officer Information:

Key Project Team Members:

Detective Superintendent Pete Fulton and Detective Inspector Carly Humphreys

Project Contact Person:

Detective Inspector Carly Humphreys

HHPU North Division

Surrey Police HQ

Mount Browne

Sandy Lane

Guildford

GU1 9PE

Tel: 01483 637308

Email: carly.humphreys@surrey.pnn.police.uk