

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 20TH AUGUST 2012

REPORT ON: HIGH RISK OFFENDERS SELF EVALUATION

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 292 - 2012

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to update the Social Work and Health Committee on progress made on the implementation of an improvement plan developed following a high risk offenders self-evaluation exercise carried out between November 2010 and April 2011. A previous report outlining the findings of the exercise and the contents of the improvement plan was approved by members in June 2011.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:

- 2.1 Note progress made in the implementation of the High Risk Offender Self-Evaluation Improvement Plan.
- 2.2 Endorse ongoing arrangements for the risk assessment and risk management of high risk of harm offenders and their oversight through the Sex and Violent Offender Advisory Group.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 Background

Members are reminded that in June 2009, the Scottish Government published the findings of a national multi-agency thematic inspection on work with sexual and violent offenders. The report made 19 recommendations, some of which related to Scottish Ministers, the Police and Scottish Prison Service (SPS) and 6 of which were directly relevant to local authorities as follows;

1. Interviewing prisoners and visiting prospective release addresses for Home Background Reports
2. Ensuring a risk of harm assessment is in place for all sexual offenders and all serious violent offenders
3. Ensuring risk management plans are in place for all sexual offenders and all serious violent offenders
4. Training staff involved in Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) to ensure they understand the needs of the Parole Board
5. Formally selecting and supporting staff involved in the risk assessment and risk management of high risk of harm offenders
6. Establishing local MAPPA strategic oversight boards to oversee the performance of MAPPA operations and plan for future development

In Dundee, all such arrangements were already in place when the inspection report was published and work was pro-actively focused on improving the actual quality of

assessments and interventions with the target group. In November 2010, the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA), in partnership with the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW), then facilitated a national self-evaluation.

4.2 **Process and Outcomes**

The self-evaluation facilitated by SWIA was carried out on a peer review basis with Criminal Justice Social Work colleagues in Angus and Perth and Kinross. It incorporated 5 inter-related categories of assessment on outcomes, impact, key processes, staff and leadership. Using this framework, each area identified strengths and developed relevant improvement plans.

In Dundee, where a Public Protection Team is uniquely co-located with Tayside Police Offender Management Officers, an NHS Sex Offender Liaison Officer, Sex Offender Group Work Facilitators and the Tayside MAPPA Coordinator, evidence gathered from the exercise demonstrated the following;

1. Outcomes (how do we know that we reduce the risk of harm) - good
2. Impact (how good are we at getting and acting on feedback) - adequate
3. Key processes (how do we know we assess, manage and work collaboratively) - good
4. Staff (how do we know staff have the right skills, training and support) - very good
5. Leadership (how do we know there is proper oversight and management) - good

The category on impact was rated as adequate because although feedback from both offenders and other stakeholders was obtained, it was not currently structured or routine enough. Overall, practice was rated as good and some of the particular strengths included strong multi-disciplinary working, appropriate prioritisation and targeting of resources and robust risk assessment and risk management.

These outcomes compared very favourably with other local authorities and an improvement plan was developed to help facilitate continuous improvement. The plan involved 9 actions, including a review of risk assessment formats, implementing frameworks for offender feedback, increasing training in models of risk assessment and introducing case chronologies.

4.3 **Implementation of the Action Plan**

Over the last 12 months, the Tayside Sex and Violent Offender Advisory Group (SAVOAG) has coordinated and overseen implementation of the plan. This is a multi-agency group consisting of representatives of Criminal Justice Social Work, Tayside Police, Tayside NHS, the Scottish Prison Service and the Tayside Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Coordinator.

In Dundee, all 9 actions have been successfully implemented and service delivery continuously improved. There has been a particular focus on improving communication and collaboration on work with high risk of harm offenders with local communities, other agencies, colleagues in Angus and Perth and Kinross and offenders themselves. Developments have included;

- Contributions to Committee Reports submitted to the Tayside Community Justice Authority and shared commissioning of the Naomi Breeze drama production for community groups
- Consideration of the Thomas Benny Smith Enquiry Report and comparison of local performance showing compliance with the recommendations
- Quarterly file auditing of a random sample of high risk of harm cases showing the quality of risk assessments and risk management plans was consistently good or very good
- Training in new risk assessment tools for violent offenders and ongoing consultation with a Consultant Clinical Forensic Psychologist for particularly complex sex offender cases
- An audit of the use of the Violent and Sex Offender Register (VISOR) risk management tool showing adherence to Minimum Standards on the nature and quality of information

- Implementation of chronologies for high risk of harm offenders and an offender feedback questionnaire
- Continuing to exceed the national target in respect of attendance at Integrated Case Management (ICM) Meetings with the SPS, coordinating case management plans in prisons

In terms of corporate oversight in Dundee, the Chief Officers Group meets regularly to ensure a consistent strategic approach in respect of child and adult protection. The respective Lead Officers for MAPPA, Child Protection, Adult Protection and Violence Against Women similarly meet to share, develop and improve resources and practice.

4.4 **Ongoing Priorities**

The intention is to update and enhance public information on how high risk of harm offenders are assessed and managed. A new MAPPA leaflet is being developed for the public and a variety of opportunities for awareness raising are being progressed, including a multi-agency event in November 2012 organised through the auspices of the Chief Officers Group.

In addition, ongoing scrutiny of risk assessments and risk management plans will include quarterly case file audits and twice yearly audits of VISOR. Staff involved in this area of work will continue to be selected, trained and supported in accordance with internal policies, the recommendations of the thematic inspection and routine counselling when delivering an accredited group work programme.

5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

5.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and will be made available on the Council website <http://www.dundee.gov.uk/equanddiv/equimpact/>.

6.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in preparation of this report.

7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Multi-Agency Thematic Inspection of the Risk Assessment and Risk Management of High Risk of Harm Offenders www.scotland.gov.uk/justice

7.2 Equality Impact Assessment

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DATE: 9th August 2012