

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 27TH OCTOBER 2008

REPORT ON: ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING HIGH RISK OFFENDERS

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 505 - 2008

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report summarises the first Annual Report on arrangements for managing high risk offenders across Tayside. The Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act introduced a statutory function for Responsible Authorities - Local Authorities, Scottish Prison Service, Police and Health to establish joint arrangements for the assessment and management of the risks posed by certain offenders who pose a risk of harm to the public. The responsible authorities are required to keep arrangements under review and publish an annual report.
- 1.2 The introduction of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) across Scotland in April 2007 introduced a consistent approach to the management of offenders across local authority and police force areas providing a framework for assessing and managing certain offenders. In Scotland the implementation of MAPPA has been phased and currently extends to registered sex offenders. Work is on-going to agree the operational detail of extending the arrangements to violent offenders but, for the purpose of the first annual report, the focus is on registered sex offenders. It should, however, be noted that Local Authorities and Police do also work co-operatively in relation to violent offenders.
- 1.3 A full copy of the report has been passed to each of the Group Leaders and Bailie Borthwick.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Social Work and Health Committee:
 - 2.1.1 Note the contents of the report and the on-going developments in relation to high risk offenders;
 - 2.1.2 Instruct the Director of Social Work to inform the Committee of any developments in relation to violent offenders and of the recommendations arising from the thematic inspection of risk of harm offenders;
 - 2.1.3 Instruct the Director of Social Work to present such reports to Committee on an annual basis.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

4.1 There have always been sexual offenders and they are present in every community. There is no typical sexual offence and no typical sex offender, the vast majority of sexual offences are committed by people known to their victim either a family member, friend or acquaintance. Sexual offences cause considerable anxiety and, although reconviction rates are low, it is recognised that people are concerned about the risk presented. Managing risks within the community is a complex task which cuts across the organisational boundaries of many agencies, members of the public also have an important role in public protection and have a responsibility to protect vulnerable members of the community. Although risk can never be eradicated, the authorities are continually strengthening arrangements and improving public information, and it is hoped that this report will improve awareness of how known sex offenders are managed in the community.

4.2 The multi agency approach to assessing and managing offenders who are assessed as posing a risk of harm to others is well established in Tayside. Joint working between Social Work and Police dates back to 1997 following the introduction of the Sex Offenders Act 1997.

The Management of Offenders Act, and the introduction of Multi Agency Public Protection arrangements in April 2007, provided an opportunity to review and strengthen existing working relationships and develop closer working arrangements with a range of other agencies who also have a role in managing offenders. Both Social Work and Police have specially trained officers who work with high risk offenders - Offender Management teams within the Police and Criminal Justice Services Public Protection Teams within Social Work. Joint working between these teams is critical to the process and ensures that responses to high risk offenders are closely linked to arrangements for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. An experienced Detective Constable has been seconded to the post of MAPPA Co-ordinator which has also strengthened arrangements.

Within Dundee, Police Officers and Social Work staff are co-located within Social Work premises alongside the specialist treatment programme for sexual offenders, the ViSOR terminal (Violent and Sexual Offender Register) and the Tayside MAPPA Co-ordinator. This approach allows for improved information sharing and agreed responses to sexual offenders.

4.3 MAPPA is a set of arrangements established by the Responsible Authorities to assess and manage the risk posed by certain sexual and violent offenders. A number of agencies are under a duty to co-operate with the responsible authorities - examples include the Children's Reporter, housing providers and the voluntary sector. This allows for the sharing of information and a Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed between the Responsible Authorities and Duty to Co-operate agencies across Tayside to facilitate this process.

Information about registered sex offenders is shared across relevant agencies. The nature and level of risk of harm they pose is assessed and a risk management plan is implemented. Most offenders are assessed as presenting a low or medium risk of harm and will be managed by one agency without the significant or on-going involvement of others. A number of offenders will, however, require multi agency management and their risk management plans will be agreed via MAPPA meetings attended by various agencies.

- 4.4 A strategic Oversight Group has been established locally to oversee arrangements. This group is chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable of Tayside Police and includes representation from all the Responsible Authorities, the Crown Office and Prosecution Service, Scottish Courts and Victim Support.
- 4.5 There have been a number of other developments locally to support the introduction of MAPPA, these include:
- introduction of an accredited group work treatment programme for adult male sex offenders which is delivered by Social Work through the Tay Project;
 - the introduction of accredited risk assessment tools for sexual offenders accompanied by a multi agency training programme attended by police, social work and Scottish prison Service;
 - agreed responses to sexually aggressive young people which are based on the principles of MAPPA;
 - the appointment of a designated MAPPA Liaison officer within each of the 3 Local Authority Housing Departments who hold information centrally, work closely with the police and social work in relation to accommodation issues and provide a link to other housing providers;
 - several awareness raising sessions.
- 4.6 HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons and the Social Work Inspection agency are carrying out a joint Thematic Inspection of the management of high risk of harm. In April 2008, they reviewed a national sample of 60 offenders recently released from prison on supervision license, with a focus on release plans, risk assessment, risk management and multi-agency working. Their findings will be published early 2009 and will form the basis of a local action plan which will be reported to Committee.
- 4.7 The following statistics are of note:
- There are 275 registered sex offenders within Tayside, 109 in Dundee;
 - 97 (35%) of the registered offenders in Tayside are required to register their details for life therefore the number of offenders on the register is likely to increase;
 - 267 (97%) of offenders across Tayside complied with their registration requirements;
 - Eight offenders were reported as either wanted or missing;
 - the vast majority of offenders , 202 , are assessed as presenting a low or medium risk of harm and are managed by one agency;
 - 72 offenders are managed jointly with one being assessed as presenting a very high risk of serious harm;

- 39 offenders across Tayside are actively engaged in specialist treatment programmes delivered by the Tay Project.
- 4.7 The indications are that arrangements for MAPPA are working well across Tayside, and this, coupled with other developments in relation to high risk offenders, has strengthened arrangements for managing sexual offenders, introduced greater consistency and ensured the appropriate involvement of other agencies. It is anticipated that the arrangements will be extended to include violent offenders however the mechanisms are in place across Tayside to enable appropriate planning for this.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report has been screened for any policy implications in relation to sustainability, strategic environmental assessment, anti-poverty, equality impact assessment and risk management.

There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Head of Finance and the other responsible authorities have been consulted in preparation of this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Scottish Government's MAPPA Guidance was consulted in the preparation of this document.

Alan G Baird
Director of Social Work

DATE:
8th October 2008