

**REPORT TO: SOCIAL WORK AND HEALTH COMMITTEE - 7 DECEMBER 2009**

**REPORT ON: REPORT ON ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING HIGH RISK OFFENDERS**

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK**

**REPORT NO: 586-2009**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 This report summarises the second Annual Report on arrangements for managing high risk offenders across Tayside and covers the period 1 April 2008 - 31 March 2009.

The Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005 introduced a statutory function for Responsible Authorities - Local Authorities, Scottish Prison Service (SPS), Police and Health to establish joint arrangements for the assessment and management of the risk posed by certain offenders who pose a risk of harm to the public. The Responsible Authorities are required to keep the arrangements under review and publish an annual report.

The introduction of Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) across Scotland in April 2007 introduced a consistent approach to the management of offenders. In Scotland the implementation on MAPPA has been phased and currently extends to registered sex offenders and, with effect from April 2008, Restricted Patients.

Work continues on a national basis to agree the arrangements for violent offenders. It should be noted that local partners continue to work co-operatively in relation to violent offenders however, there are no immediate plans to extend MAPPA arrangements to include violent offenders.

- 1.2 A full copy of the report has been passed to each of the Group Leaders, Lord Provost Letford and Depute Lord Provost 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;
- 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 There are no financial implications for the Council.

## **4.0 MAIN TEXT**

- 4.1 There are sexual offenders within every community and, although reconviction rates are low, it is recognised that the public are concerned about the risks presented.
- 4.2 Managing risks within the community is a complex task which cuts across the organisational boundaries of many agencies. The public also have an important role in public protection and have a responsibility to protect vulnerable members of the community.

The Responsible Authorities are continuing to strengthen the arrangements and improve public information and it is hoped that this report will improve awareness as to how known sex offenders and restricted patients are managed within our communities.

In Tayside, joint working between Social Work and Police has been long standing in the management and assessment of offenders who pose a high risk of harm to others. The Management of Offenders Act, and the introduction of MAPPA, provided an opportunity to review and strengthen the existing close co-operation and working arrangements. This has also allowed for the inclusion of other agencies that have a role in the management of certain offenders, in particular health and voluntary sector organisations.

- 4.3 MAPPA is the process whereby the assessment and sharing of information on offenders is managed. The Responsible Authorities and Duty to Co-operate agencies within Tayside have an agreed Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate this process.
- 4.4 Since April 2008 the management of Restricted Patients has been included in MAPPA. Restricted patients are those individuals who, by virtue of their offences or behaviour, are subject to a hospital order and are closely managed within an NHS setting with any unescorted access to the community being discussed within MAPPA.
- 4.5 To ensure consistency, and agree approaches for improvement, regular events for the Chairs of MAPPA meetings have been introduced. These events have been well attended and have resulted in changes within MAPPA meetings.

A MAPPA leaflet was produced to provide those attending meetings with a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities.

One of the major developments within Tayside has been the introduction of a dedicated post within NHS - a MAPPA Health Liaison Officer. This is a unique role in Scotland which has been filled by an experienced staff nurse. This post is a year long pilot project which aims to establish the wider implications of MAPPA for NHS Services. The experience to date is that the postholder has provided valuable information in relation to the management of offenders and it is hoped that the remit will be extended beyond the pilot phase. The officer carrying out this role is based within the co-located Criminal Justice/Police/MAPPA office at Friarfield House, Dundee.

Training events have also taken place across Tayside. Recently a 1½ day event, organised as part of the Community Justice Authorities' arrangements for workforce development, was delivered in Dundee to members of the voluntary sector (Apex, Action for Children and Includem), this focused on the assessment and management of sex offenders. This event was held to coincide with the publication of the MAPPA Annual report and had positive local television and media coverage. It is hoped that this event will be rolled out across Tayside. Further training events involving staff from the three local authorities, Police and SPS have also taken place.

It should also be noted that the post of MAPPA Co-ordinator was undertaken by a seconded Detective Constable for a period of two years however, this secondment has been extended and the current MAPPA Co-ordinator will remain in post until May 2011 allowing for greater consistency.

- 4.6 The following statistics are of note:
  - As of 31 March 2009 there were 298 registered sex offenders within Tayside, this is an increase of 23 offenders since March 2008.
  - 287 (96%) of offenders across Tayside complied with their registration requirements, this is similar to the compliance rate of the previous report.
  - 6 offenders were reported as either wanted or missing, a decrease of 2 offenders from the previous report.
  - 221 are assessed as presenting a low or medium risk of harm and the majority are managed by Police only, again this is a similar figure to the previous report.
  - 77 are managed jointly with 9 offenders requiring senior management involvement as they presented as a very high risk of serious harm
  - 99.66% of the offenders in Tayside are male
  - 32% of the offenders are on statutory supervision
  - 65% of the offenders were convicted of an offence against a child under 16 years

4.7 The indications are that MAPPA continues to work well within Tayside and developments continue to be overseen by the MAPPA Strategic Oversight group chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable.

4.8 In terms of future developments for 2009/2010, the following is planned:

- Review of the NHS MAPPA Liaison post;
- Further training linked to national priorities and the Community Justice Authorities workforce development plans;
- Ensuring links with the risk agenda and a continued focus on protecting people;
- Reviewing and implementing the recommendations arising from the recent thematic inspection into the management of high risk offenders.

## **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 other Responsible Authorities have been consulted in preparation of this report, also the Chief Officer of the Tayside Community Justice Authority, the Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Director of Finance.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

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

**Alan G Baird**  
**Director of Social Work**

DATE: 13 November 2009