

DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL

REPORT TO SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE - 15 October 2001

REPORT ON: EMPLOYMENT SERVICES FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK

REPORT NO: 673 - 2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report informs the committee of the development of an employment service for Criminal Justice Social Work clients. This service will be delivered in partnership with Angus Council, Dundee City Council, Perth & Kinross Council and Apex (Scotland). This report provides a summary of the initiative and highlights its significance in relation to the contribution of the service in reducing offending.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Social Work Committee:-

2.1 Notes and approves the contents of the report

2.2 Authorises the Director of Social Work to commission an employability project from Apex (Scotland).

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Criminal Justice Social Work Service is 100% funded by the Scottish Executive. There are no financial implications for the council. This project is subject to final funding approval by the Scottish Executive.

4.0 AGENDA 21

The Employability Project will contribute to a reduction in crime and will promote the social inclusion of offenders.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

The service will be available to all criminal justice service clients.

6.0 MAIN TEXT

6.1 Research indicates that individuals with a criminal record face significant barriers in finding and obtaining employment. Statistical information exists which shows that offenders share the following characteristics:

- An average of 60% are below foundation level in literacy and numeracy
- Over 70% have been unemployed for a minimum of 12 months; this figure rises to 80% for women
- A minimum of 60% have no history of employment or education/vocational achievement or certification

- An average of 50% with drug and/or alcohol abuse rising to an average of around 70% for women

These characteristics combined with an unstructured lifestyle, periods of relationship instability and occasional homelessness contribute to an inability to access and sustain involvement in the mainstream provision of employment and training opportunities.

6.2 The Criminal Justice Social Work Services of Angus, Dundee and Perth & Kinross Councils have invited Apex (Scotland) to design a programme which will work with offender clients to help individuals move from unemployable to employable.

6.3 The programme, known as the Employability Project, will focus on the core competencies and basic skills required to demonstrate employability. Among other areas the project will focus on the areas of:

- Literacy and numeracy
- Information Technology familiarisation
- Adaptability
- Reliability
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Teamwork

Opportunities will be provided for the individual to acquire, demonstrate and evidence personal development together with basic and core skills and will offer planned personal milestones to chart progress and build maturation.

The programme design has been informed by consultation with the Employment Services agency to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure that the core skills which individuals are taught are appropriate to the needs of local employers.

6.4 Apex (Scotland) is a voluntary sector agency, which has a proven record of effectiveness in supporting offenders obtain and sustain paid employment.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation has taken place with the Director of Support Services and the Director of Finance in the preparation of this report.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

9.0 SIGNATURE

Acting Director of Social Work

Date

3 October 2001