

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 26 JANUARY 2006

OUTCOMES FROM SEX OFFENDERS' AUDIT – EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Committee of the analysis of information from the audit on Sex Offenders conducted by East Ayrshire Council staff in conjunction with Strathclyde Police, Offender Assessment Unit in August 2005.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) published a report on the Investigation into the Management and Post Release Supervision of a sex offender in North Lanarkshire on 18th April 2005.
- 2.2 As a consequence of the concerns highlighted in this report the Minister for Justice wrote to Local Authority Chief Executives, the Association of Chief Constables and the Scottish Prison Service asking that they jointly audit all medium and high risk sex offenders to ensure that:
- (a) A competent risk assessment had been undertaken in each case.
 - (b) Arrangements for supervision were in place and were being reviewed on a regular basis.
- 2.3 In August 2005, staff from Social Services and Housing Services, together with Strathclyde Police concluded the audit of those registered sex offenders within East Ayrshire who were subject to compulsory supervision by social work.
- 2.4 The audit undertaken followed a recommended format provided by SWIA and covered the areas of :-
- (i) Risk assessment and risk management
 - (ii) Contact and Supervision of offenders
 - (iii) Review arrangements
- 2.5 In September 2005, an analysis of the Audit was submitted to the Chief Executive to allow her to respond to the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA).
- 2.6 This analysis highlighted areas of good practice in the management of sex offenders across East Ayrshire and concluded that practice across the authority was generally positive.
- 2.7 Any areas for practice improvement were also highlighted within the analysis of the audit.

2.8 Due to the logistics the audit of Sex Offenders in prison and the Police audit of all registered sex offenders were undertaken as part of separate processes.

2.9 The outcome of these audits are still awaited.

3. SUMMARY OF AUDIT FINDINGS IN RESPECT OF OFFENDERS SUBJECT TO SUPERVISION BY SOCIAL WORK

3.1 The main findings from this audit were as follows:-

- All 20 cases audited had been the subject of assessment in relation to the likelihood of individuals re offending. All risk assessments are now undertaken jointly with the police and other relevant agencies.
- All 20 cases audited contained plans within the case record which indicated a plan for the management of the risk posed by the offender. The majority of these plans evidenced consideration of child protection and adult protection issues. All care plans will evidence these aspects in future.
- The level of contact with offenders met Criminal Justice National Standards in all 20 cases and exceeded this standard in many of the cases
- Police assumed the primary role in undertaking unannounced visits to offenders which we have now extended to social work undertaking unannounced visits to all registered sex offenders as part of the risk management plan
- The audit found evidence of formal multi agency working in case files and noted that 18 of the 20 cases audited had been discussed within the context of a multi agency conference. This practice has been extended to all cases.
- There was evidence of good joint working with housing services in the vast majority of cases in which housing was identified as an issue. All cases will evidence this in future.
- All cases audited have been reviewed and individual action plans included in case records as appropriate.

3.2 An action plan covering the areas of progress to date has been prepared and agreed by the Chief Executive.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 The audit process and the subsequent evaluation of the findings by the authority has proved a useful process in shaping our views in a number of areas of practice.

4.2 The information elicited from this exercise will be used to inform practice developments and standards within Criminal Justice services. Officers within Criminal Justice services are currently considering a process for continuous self

evaluation within the service and the results of the audit will serve as a good basis upon which to develop this process.

5. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None at this time.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None at this time.

7. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The action plan and practice developments arising from the audit of sex offenders are aimed at increasing community safety and managing the offending of high risk offenders. This work is done on a multi agency basis and is consistent with the principles of the Improving Community Safety theme of the Community Plan.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Members of Social Work Committee are requested to:-

- (i) invite the Chief Social Work Officer to return to Social Work Committee with the outcome of the audit conducted by the Scottish Prison Service and Strathclyde Police; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
(Encs 0)

19 January 2006

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report on the Investigation into the Management and Post Release Supervision of a sex offender in North Lanarkshire
2. Letter from Justice Minister to Chief Executives
3. For further information please contact Sally Ann Kelly, Senior Manager, Children & Families & Criminal Justice, telephone number 01563 576907

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JACKIE DONNELLY