

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 24 MARCH 2005

STRUCTURED DEFERRED SENTENCE PILOT PROJECT

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Committee of the introduction of a new Structured Deferred Sentence Pilot Project for offenders appearing before Kilmarnock Sheriff Court.
- 1.2 Advise on the Scottish Executive funding to the Ayrshire Criminal Justice Social Work Services Partnership to implement this provision.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Scottish Executive Justice Division has approved and funded a Structured Deferred Sentence Pilot Project at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court along with three other Court sites across Scotland. This will be for a two year pilot period managed by North Ayrshire Council on behalf of the Ayrshire Criminal Justice Social Work Services Partnership.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since 1991 with the introduction of National Objectives and Standards, Criminal Justice has primarily focused on community supervision orders and alternatives to custody. The Structured Deferred Sentence Project therefore is providing a new preventive measure to be applied at an early point in the criminal justice process to address offender addictions and offending behaviour.

4. STRUCTURED DEFERRED SENTENCE PILOT PROJECT

- 4.1 Aims: The Project aims to address assessed criminogenic needs and work with individuals who are subject to alcohol misuse and subsequent involvement in offending behaviour. The supervision programme will aim to encourage offenders to develop their motivation for positive change. Further, the Project will match levels of intervention and resources to the level of assessed needs and risk and will offer Sheriffs a viable alternative to other less appropriate community disposals or custody.
- 4.2 Objectives: The Project objectives are to reduce or restrict patterns and seriousness of offending behaviour. It should also provide value for money through the provision of services that seek to address criminogenic needs and divert individuals from more expensive forms of intervention and reduce up-tariffing by Courts.

- 4.3 Target: Based on a small empirical study of Social Enquiry Reports submitted from across the jurisdiction area of Kilmarnock Sheriff Court approximately 200 offenders in the low moderate risk category could be considered suitable for assessment for this pilot project. On this evidence it is anticipated there will be a service referral target of 100 individuals annually to attend the deferred sentence supervision programme.
- 4.4 Assessment: An assessment tool (Level of Service Inventory-Revised) will be used in conjunction with a Social Enquiry Report on each offender to determine suitability and advice to the Court. Should sentence be deferred to attend the Project the assessment will assist the process and level of entry to the supervision and programme. At the end of the deferment process a further assessment will be undertaken to evaluate the offender's progress and change following intervention for inclusion in a Supplementary Report to the Court.
- 4.5 Intervention: Throughout the deferment period, a case management approach will focus on addressing a variety of issues during supervision and be carried out by the appointed Criminal Justice Social Worker. Additionally, a service agreement has been put in place with the Ayrshire Council on Alcohol (ACA) to offer offenders one to one addiction counselling for sentences deferred for a period of 3 months. Where sentences are deferred for 6 months, a 12 week, 30 hours 'addiction/addressing offending behaviour' groupwork programme is being established as a joint working arrangement.

5. CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The Social Worker (CJS) and Addiction Counsellor (ACA) will be in post by 1st March 2005. Arrangements are in place with Kilmarnock Sheriff Court to have the Structured Deferred Sentence available as a disposal and the Project supervision programmes prepared to accept referrals from 1st April 2005.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 All financial costs for the development and implementation of this new Project will be met by the Scottish Executive through the funding arrangements for the Criminal Justice Social Work Services Partnership managed by North Ayrshire Council. There will be no direct costs to East Ayrshire Council.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Structured Deferred Sentence Pilot Project is being introduced to undertake the responsibilities associated with the introduction of this sentencing disposal within Kilmarnock Sheriff Court. Through the Project, alcohol related offenders will be engaged in programmes of work to address their substance misuse and subsequently reduce their involvement in antisocial offending behaviour. Committee approval is sought in support of the Ayrshire Criminal Justice Social Work Services Partnership for the implementation and introduction of the Structured Deferred Sentence Pilot Project.

8. RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Social Work Committee is requested to:

- (i) to approve, in support of the Ayrshire Criminal Justice Social Work Services Partnership, the introduction and implementation of the Structured Deferred Sentence Pilot Project for offenders appearing before Kilmarnock Sheriff Court; and
- (ii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational and Social Services
11 February 2005
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

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