

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEE : 4 NOVEMBER 2004

AYRSHIRE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK SERVICE PARTNERSHIP THROUGH-CARE PLAN

Report by the Executive Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Elected Members of the Plan for Phase 2 for Throughcare Services and to seek approval to refer proposed personnel changes and the recruitment of additional staff to the Corporate Governance Committee for further consideration.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The term "Throughcare" is used to denote the provision of a range of social work and associated services to prisoners and their families from the point of sentence or remand, during the period of imprisonment, and following release into the community. These services are primarily concerned with assisting prisoners prepare for release and to help their resettlement in the community whether required by statute as part of a licence or because a prisoner requests such a service on a voluntary basis.
- 2.2 Scottish Ministers made additional funding available in 2003 to Criminal Justice Social Work groupings for the development of Phase 1 Throughcare which focused on strengthening supervision arrangements for all prisoners who will be released subject to a statutory order or licence. Under these new arrangements, local authorities are required to appoint supervising officers to all such prisoners from the start of their sentence.

3. PHASE 1 : THROUGH-CARE

- 3.1 The Ayrshire Criminal Justice Partnership Throughcare Plan for Phase 1 was approved at an Ayrshire Criminal Justice Social Work Services Partnership Management Group on 26th March 2003, and Members were subsequently advised and approved the Plan at Social Work Committee held on 22nd May 2003, (Item 8, Page 61).
- 3.2 Development of the Throughcare Service has been slow due to recruitment difficulties. This difficulty is being experienced across groupings and is mainly due to the National shortage of qualified Social Workers. Consequently, approval is being sought to re-designate the two qualified Social Worker posts to Support Assistant posts. This change in designation will hopefully resolve the recruitment problem and enable Phase 1 Throughcare Plans to be put in place for the Ayrshire Partnership speedily.

4. PHASE 2 : THROUGH-CARE (VOLUNTARY AFTERCARE)

4.1 Phase 2 : Throughcare refers to voluntary support to prisoners serving less than four years (short term prisoners) who will be released into the community with no statutory requirement for supervision. The Scottish Executive has identified three groups as priority for voluntary aftercare:-

- High Risk offenders
- Young offenders
- Those who show a commitment to address their offending behaviour.

Women offenders who fall into the above three categories should also be a priority for support

4.2 The additional funding being made available by the Scottish Executive for Phase 2 Throughcare services is predicted on the basis that the Plan submitted shows how the Ayrshire Partnership will build on the range of services offered previously. Phase 2 Throughcare must not 'sit outside' the enhanced arrangements for Throughcare taken forward in Phase 1. The Phase 2 Throughcare Plan meets this requirement.

4.3 The Plan proposes that two Support Assistants and one Clerical Assistant be recruited to undertake the tasks associated with voluntary aftercare. The Team Manager currently responsible for Phase 1 : Throughcare will also have responsibility for the management of Phase 2, ensuring that the Ayrshire Partnership Throughcare Services meet the Scottish Executive's requirements.

5. FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Throughcare services are part of the core funding element of the 100% grant made available to the Ayrshire Partnership for Criminal Justice Social Work Services. The Ayrshire Partnership currently receives funding annually for Phase 1 : Throughcare Services. The additional resources required for Phase 2 : Throughcare (Voluntary Aftercare) has been approved and will be met wholly from the 100% grant. Phase 2 : Throughcare funding will be made available once the arrangements for Phase 1 : Throughcare are in place.

5.2 As the managing authority for dedicated Throughcare services, East Ayrshire Council is required to recruit two additional Support Assistants and one Clerical Assistant. The costs will be wholly met through the grant made available by the Scottish Executive for Criminal Justice Social Work Services.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Nil.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Plans for Phase 1 and 2 Throughcare propose a Partnership Throughcare team whose principle area of responsibility will be pre and post release work with all prisoners released from custody on statutory orders / licence and also those prisoners who request a voluntary service from Criminal Justice social Work. The Ayrshire Partnership Throughcare service will be managed across the grouping by a single dedicated manager. This post will also carry a co-coordinating and monitoring role for all throughcare services across the Partnership area.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) refer the staffing proposals within the report to Corporate Governance Committee for further consideration; and
- (ii) otherwise note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew
Executive Director of Educational & Social Services
Enc (0)
12 October 2004

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Ayrshire Criminal Justice Social Work Services Partnership : Throughcare Plan, March 2003.

For further information please contact:
Bill Eadie, Senior Manager Operations, telephone: 01563 576993

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: JACKIE DONNELLY