Report

Report to: Lanarkshire Community Justice Authority
Date of Meeting: 13 March 2015
Report by: Santosh Dade, Operations Manager, Justice and Reception Services

Subject: Women Offenders Report - South Lanarkshire Council

1. Purpose of Report
1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-
- provide an update on the developments in work with women offenders in South Lanarkshire since April 2014 as a result of receiving funding from Scottish Government;
- address the sustainability of the services in place

2. Recommendation(s)
2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-
- See note of progress.

3. Background
3.1. South Lanarkshire was awarded a grant from Scottish Government to develop services for women who offend in line with the recommendations of the report of the Commission for Women Offenders, chaired by Elish Angiolini.

In 2014-2015 the award to South Lanarkshire was £118,500. A half time team leader and full time social work assistant have been recruited to take forward the work. Additionally Justice Social Work pooled its resources across the localities to meet the funding requirements for one social worker post. The aim was to test out different styles of working and different means of reaching out to women across South Lanarkshire.

3.2. The model of service delivery decided upon is for every woman on a Court Order or referred by the Procurator Fiscal for Diversion from Prosecution to have an allocated worker from Justice Services to supervise orders, prepare Court and other reports and undertake offence-focussed work. Other personal or practical issues presented by the women such as low self esteem and self confidence or financial or relationship problems are addressed in Women’s Hubs. Intensive one-to-one contact can be offered by a social work assistant (women offenders) to those women with complex needs, who are assessed as a risk to themselves or others.

3.3. As a condition of the grant award, South Lanarkshire has collated information on the women offenders we are working with. This has been submitted quarterly to Scottish Government. Representatives from South Lanarkshire have attended all quarterly Women Offenders Network Meetings and, along with other recipients of funding, reported on plans and achievements and increased our knowledge of the work.
4 Current Position

4.1. In 2014−2015 so far, South Lanarkshire Justice Service has worked with 163 women offenders. There were 199 Community Payback Orders imposed on women offenders as some women were on multiple orders. There were further 12 women on bail supervision; and additional 44 were referred for Diversion from Prosecution. This evidences a considerable task but one that has been successfully addressed in the current model of service delivery.

4.2. Women’s Hubs

Women’s Hubs were established from May 2014 in Rutherglen, East Kilbride, Burnbank, Lesmahagow, Carluke, Lanark, and Forth. The hubs meet for a half day per week on different days with some running in the morning and some in the afternoon. The aim is to set up a centre where services are brought to the women as recommended in the Commission Report and the women are also encouraged to support each other and become involved in community activities. A healthy lunch is provided and healthier lifestyles are encouraged. Overall since the hubs started, 54 women have attended.

Partnership arrangements were made and have played an important part in ensuring the success of the hubs. E.g. Keep Well Nurses, Money Matters, Benefits Agency, SACRO mentoring, Circle, Venture Trust, Substance Misuse agencies have been involved and are invited to the hubs as the women need or request them.

The sole criterion for attendance is involvement with Justice Social Work in any capacity so not only those on CPOs attend but also women who are subject to DTTO, Diversion from Prosecution and Bail Supervision.

A system for collating information from the hubs uses the Purple Sheets and provides information on attendance, presenting issues and partnership involvement. Through this tool we can access relevant information which informs decisions about the extent of use, viability and resources required. Attached is a print out of the statistic from the Carluke hub with names of attendees concealed to preserve confidentiality.

4.3. Connections Programme

The Connections Programme was devised by Aberdeen City Council Justice Service and permission was given to run it in South Lanarkshire. The first group ran from September 2013 and Scottish Government funding has allowed it to be run at six monthly intervals since then.

Connections comprises thirteen modules and is run for a half day every week for up to twenty weeks. The venue is in Hamilton but referrals are invited from the whole of SLC and the Justice Throughcare Team. Help is given to meet travel costs for those who attend and again a healthy lunch is provided and healthy lifestyles promoted.

Six workers undertook the Groupwork Training Programme organised by the Lanarkshire Justice Training Officer and every Connections programme to date has been delivered by trained workers. The delivery of the programme is resource intensive. Two social workers from the localities are freed to facilitate the group and a social work assistant has been transferred from Diversion or other work to support the group by undertaking all the practical arrangements such as preparing the room, organising the materials and the food and supporting the women to attend and chasing up on absences.

Given the intensity of the programme only those women who have a degree of stability are eligible and the programme is targeted at those who pose a medium to high risk of re-offending.

The third Connections Programme is currently running. Thirteen referrals were received and eight women started the programme with one woman withdrawn after the initial meeting. The remaining seven women attend well. Weekly feedback sheets are completed and individual assessments are undertaken at the beginning, middle and end of the programme
to measure the women’s progress. All the programmes so far have attracted positive feedback from the women who attend and the facilitators.

An independent evaluation of the programme is currently being undertaken by Community Links and the outcome will influence the future course of the programme.

4.4. **Rutherglen Justice Team pilot**
The Justice Team in Rutherglen is unique in South Lanarkshire in that it deals mostly with Glasgow Courts and has Glasgow facing services such as Glasgow Health Board. As such it was well placed to pilot a different way of working with women offenders. It agreed an arrangement whereby two female social workers undertook all the work with women offenders on a CPO or referred for CJSWRs. The two social workers committed to working closely together and sharing information about every case so that the women they worked with enjoyed continuity and consistency of service and approach, a secure and safe environment if they encountered difficulty and the opportunity to develop sound change relationships.

The workers have dealt with 21 new orders since April 2014 and have supervised very complex cases, managed multi agency involvement and made positive links with services for women. The arrangement has allowed the social workers to develop greater knowledge and experience of work with women offenders and consequently they have contributed considerably to the women offenders’ agenda in South Lanarkshire.

4.5. **Intensive Support**
This service is offered by the social work assistant (women offenders) to any Justice service user in South Lanarkshire. Those referred are usually chaotic, vulnerable and with complex needs. Work focuses on establishing stability, accessing crucial services and building a trusting relationship. Since April 2014, 19 women have been offered a service.

4.6. In order to develop and consolidate partnership working and maximise partner involvement a Women Offenders Partnership Meeting takes place every eight weeks and is chaired by the Justice Service Operations Manager. Voluntary sector and other South Lanarkshire Services attend and the meeting has also been attended by Mary Beglan from the Women Offenders’ Team. Scottish Government. The meeting is currently starting to make inroads to establishing pathways to Mental Health Services for women offenders.

5. **Employee Implications**
5.1. Scottish Government funding concludes on 31 March 2015 and no further financial support will be available.

5.2. Funding has been identified to continue the Social Work Assistant post. The part time Team Leader post currently has no funding and so alternative options require to be identified.

6. **Financial Implications**
6.1. Funding sources will require to be identified to cover hire of appropriate venues for hubs and to cover travel costs for the women offenders attending the hubs, Connections and for intensive support.

**Lanarkshire Community Justice Authority**

**List of Background Papers**

- Hub ‘Purple Sheets’

**Contact for Further Information**
If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:

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