

REPORT TO SOCIAL WORK AND HOUSING COMMITTEE – 4 JUNE 2015

CRIMINAL JUSTICE WOMEN'S SERVICE IN ABERDEENSHIRE

1 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1.1 Acknowledge the launch of the Criminal Justice Women's Service in Aberdeenshire and support the plans for further integration with Health Services.

2 Background/Discussion

2.1 The Commission on Women Offenders (Scottish Government, 2012), provided an evidence base for the need for a distinct and gender responsive approach to working with women in the criminal justice system. The Commission reported that women's routes into offending are largely distinct from that of men, therefore requiring a different approach to intervention and support. In respect of health, women were reported to be more likely than men (or non-offending female peers) to have significantly higher rates of mental health problems, background of trauma and abuse, and problems with drug misuse. While mental health and/or history of abuse and trauma were not reported to necessarily place women at a greater risk of offending, these issues can be directly or indirectly related to the development of drug/substance misuse behaviours, which have been shown to be a strong predictor of reoffending. It was therefore assessed as vital that both mental health and substance misuse needs are addressed in any holistic intervention for women in the criminal justice system.

2.2 In 2013, the Scottish Government invited local authorities to submit applications for funding to implement the recommendations made by the Commission. Aberdeenshire Council received 63K to fund a one year Women's Service Coordinator post to carry out this work across Aberdeenshire. Primary to the recommendations made by the Commission, was the suggestion that Local Authorities should provide women with Community Justice Centres, which would have, at a minimum, criminal justice social work, a health professional and an addictions worker. A scoping exercise was undertaken in April 2014 to gather the information to consider the various ways that Aberdeenshire's Women's Service could be designed. The following provides a summary of the data gathered. In March 2014 there were a total of 94 women open to the criminal justice service. Of this total, 83 were living in the community and were the subject of a Community Payback Order imposed by Court. 11 women were in custody. Of those living in the community, the geographical breakdown was Marr 11, Kincardine and Mearns 6, Garioch 16, Formartine 6, Buchan 19, Banff and Buchan 25. This data identifies pockets where there are higher numbers of female offenders

across Aberdeenshire, corresponding with the larger towns. The challenge has been to ensure that the Women's Service is deliverable to the single numbers of women in far more remote locations across the area. Further data gathering provided information about offence details for every woman residing in the community: crimes of dishonesty 15, drug offences 10, fire raising 2, vandalism 2, miscellaneous offences 25, non-sexual crimes of violence 17, offences relating to motor vehicles 12. Additional data gathered provided a snapshot of involvement with mental health, substance misuse and Children and Families social work. 11 women had involvement with mental health teams, 39 were involved with substance misuse teams and 46 involved with Children and Families social work. It is likely that there were crossovers in the numbers of women in these primary services.

- 2.3 The geography of Aberdeenshire does not allow for the establishment of Community Justice Centres and so multi-disciplinary working relationships have been built with substance misuse and mental health services on the basis of good practice in joint working, and awareness raising around the specific needs and risks of women offenders. However, despite improved working relationships, individual service criteria can still present challenges in terms of referring/engaging women, as can women's own reservations and fears about engaging with health services, based on poor previous experiences, or lack of confidence and trust. Women may also be closed to services after a number of failures to attend appointments, which can reinforce their negative view of support services and willingness for future engagement. As such, women in criminal justice are often not meaningfully engaged with the health and substance misuse services that they would benefit from, and their needs remain largely unmet.
- 2.4 Aberdeenshire's Criminal Justice Women's Service will be operational from the 1st April 2015, after a year of development. The service is based on practitioners adopting a gender responsive and trauma informed approach to working with women, linking in with partner agencies and services to provide a holistic and 'wrap around' service. The final report and diagrammatic summary is attached as Appendix 1. These documents provide an overview of the work undertaken to develop the service and provides a detailed operational framework. These documents have been submitted to the Scottish Government to summarise the work undertaken in terms of the funding received.
- 2.5 The Women's Service has already linked in with the NHS Keepwell Service, and with the Community Health Improvement Advisors (in Peterhead and Fraserburgh only) and although these services will provide screening appointments and advocacy with health services, as well as potential health input to drop-in groups, they offer more short term support, relying on mainstream health services to follow any referrals up. As such, some gaps in health provision will remain.
- 2.6 Aberdeenshire have now submitted a bid to the Scottish Government for additional funding for 1.5 FTE Community Psychiatric Nursing posts within Aberdeenshire's Women's Service. Community Psychiatric Nursing attached to the Criminal Justice Women's Service could help to bridge these gaps, through the development of a service which could provide:

- Regular health screening sessions for all new/existing female service users, and support to access appropriate health services or GP practices, with follow up where necessary
- One to one support for specific health/substance misuse needs
- Support and motivation for continued engagement with existing substance misuse or mental health services.
- Advice and support for dealing with stress and anxiety (group or 1:1)
- Referral to specialist services if necessary
- Relaxation techniques

Depending on the individual skills and training of the CPN, it may also be possible to offer:

- Sexual health advice
- Facilitation (with social work staff) of trauma based groupwork programmes or 1:1 sessions
- Blood Borne Virus testing
- Hepatitis B injections

- 2.7 This post (s) would cover Aberdeenshire North and South, and although intervention could be delivered from a variety of locations (social work services offices (if appropriate), GP surgeries, and local community resources) there would also be an expectation that outreach intervention was provided, where health or addiction issues were presenting a barrier to engagement and progress with services. Supervision in terms of day to day practice issues and multi-agency working would be provided by the lead practitioner for Aberdeenshire's Women's Service, with clinical supervision being provided through NHS Grampian's Clinical governance arrangements.
- 2.8 Having CPN services attached to criminal justice would further embed the practice model which has been developed as the outcome of the work undertaken over the last 12 months by the Scottish Government funded Women's Service Coordinator post. Bringing health provision into a social work team also directly meets the principles of Health and Social Care Integration under the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, whereby there is a commitment to improve the quality and consistency of care for service users, and ensure that resources are used effectively and efficiently to deliver services to those with complex needs. Social Work Services for adults, mental health and drug and alcohol services are three of the social care services which the Scottish Government state must be integrated on a mandatory basis.
- 2.9 Over the last year there has been ongoing discussions with the NCJA Woman's Service Co-ordinator in terms of the vision for a Woman's Service in Aberdeenshire. In view of the wider context of community justice redesign in Scotland ongoing discussion has also take place with our Community Planning Partnership in terms of meeting elements of the Aberdeenshire Single Outcome Agreement.

3. Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Head of Finance, the Monitoring Officer with Business Services and the Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development have been consulted on the contents of this report. The costs of the Women's Service are contained within the existing S27 funding allocation received from the Northern Community Justice Authority. In terms of sustainability, if the Scottish Government do not future fund the 1.5 fte CPN posts then these posts will not be sustained within existing resources.
- 3.2 An equality impact assessment is not required because there is no impact on service delivery at this stage in redesign.

Ritchie Johnson
Director of Communities

Report prepared by Dawn Leslie, Social Work Manager
25 May 2015 final

Glossary of Terms referred to in Appendix 1

CJSWR	Criminal Justice Social Work Report
CJS	Criminal Justice Service
CJC	Community Justice Centre
CLD	Community Learning and Development
DBT	Dialectical Behaviour Therapy – cognitive behavioural psychotherapy approach to addressing trauma
FOB	Female Offending Behaviour Programme
LSCMI	Risk Assessment Tool used in Criminal Justice Reports “Level of Service: Case Management Inventory”
MH	Mental Health
SROBP	Substance Related Offending Behaviour Programme

Appendix 1

ABERDEENSHIRE CRIMINAL JUSTICE WOMEN'S SERVICE – SUMMARY REPORT TO THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT FOR FUNDING PERIOD 2014-2015

1) Background to the funding:

Aberdeenshire recognised that the Commission on Women Offenders (2012) recommended Community Justice Centres (CJC) as the most effective means of addressing the gender specific risks and needs of female offenders. However, there was also a recognition that Aberdeenshire's rural geography would not allow for this, as there was no 'one base' that would serve the female offending population of the area. The challenge therefore was to replicate the benefits of the CJC's within a large rural community. Aberdeenshire proposed to do this by embedding the following key considerations into their model:

- Creating safe places
- Multi agency approaches – but avoiding 'overload' of support/agencies
- Importance of relationships
- Empathetic, well trained practitioners
- Holistic interventions
- Practical and Emotional supports
- Recognising the hierarchy of needs
- Flexibility
- Responsivity
- Models of support that reflect the non-linear processes involved in desistance and recovery (Services should reflect change theory – and recognise that desistance and recovery may take multiple attempts and support must include strategies to work with lapse and relapse.)
- An identifiable 'key worker' or 'case manager'
- Women understand the role of each agency
- Sustainability

Aberdeenshire's approach to enabling these considerations was built around existing local good practice and working arrangements, and successes that were already in place, and proposed a four prong model encompassing:

- A strategic 'whole system' approach**
- An operational 'good practice' approach**
- A co-ordinated approach**
- A learning and development approach**

2) Aberdeenshire's Women Service:

The focus of the funding period 2014-2015 has been to develop a criminal justice women's service that can be embedded into the everyday practice of the criminal justice team, with a wider remit to develop awareness of the understanding of the specific needs and risks of women offenders with partner agencies and services, so that a more responsive and holistic service can be offered. There was an additional focus on sustainability, so that no additional funding would be required in order for the service to sustain itself. We have achieved these objectives. The following information will update on the adherence to the 4 prong model, and additional progress and development that has been made over the last year.

A strategic 'whole system' approach: It was not possible to use the Community Integration Board from HMP Grampian as a steering and reference group for the development of the women's service. However, the membership of the group was useful in establishing prison and community based links that could be developed individually for the women's service.

An operational 'good practice approach': Following on from this, we were able to develop a structured network of practitioners across agencies and disciplines in order to create a more holistic and responsive service for female offenders. In order to do this, whole teams were approached from Housing, Community Mental Health and Community Substance Misuse to raise awareness of the routes into and out of offending for women, as well as the development of strong working links with third sector services, NHS services, Psychological services within HMP Grampian, and sport and leisure services within the Aberdeenshire Council. This has enabled there to be single points of contact with agencies, the agreement of participation in multi-agency case management where appropriate, assertive outreach where possible, and more open lines of communication for support and advice, which might otherwise have required formal referrals (and therefore referral criteria).

A co-ordinated approach: Our starting point was to look at what models already have a proven track record and to build on existing good practice. We have therefore linked into a number of existing successful multi agency partnerships, and continue to use these partnerships to explore the use of diversion and bail supervision, and fully utilise the Gender Based Abuse Multi Agency Partnership to keep wholly updated and involved in the provision of services for women (and girls) who are subjected to domestic abuse and other forms of gender based violence.

A Learning and Development approach: Aberdeenshire recognised that a well trained work force who were aware and responsive to the specific needs of women who offend would be vital to the success of a criminal justice women's service. In order to raise awareness and knowledge around the specific needs and risks of women offenders, we have delivered basic awareness sessions at a large number of team meetings, spanning a variety of services, and have provided links to additional reading. We have also delivered four days of intensive training by Clinical Psychologists to a number

of multi-agency practitioners, who agreed that by participating they would be the 'champions' for women offenders within their service. The training looked at personality disorder/difficulty, substance misuse and trauma in female offending, and offered much practical advice and guidance around how to effectively work with women who are affected by these complex issues. Workbooks have been developed from the materials provided at these training days, and these will be available to all staff. We have additionally developed a training and awareness raising course on women offenders on ALDO, Aberdeenshire's online training facility. This will also be available to all staff, from any service, and will be built into the induction for all new criminal justice staff, and student social workers.

The key considerations as detailed in section 1 have been embedded into the Practice Guidance, which has been attached to this Report for your reference.

In addition to the progress that is detailed above, Aberdeenshire's Women's Service will also:

- Provide drop-in sessions at HMP Grampian, so that support is offered more pro-actively and awareness is raised around the community provision for women offenders
- Link in with HMP Psychology services where there is cause for concern that an assessment for programmes might be required, or where the Women's Support Worker can assist in motivating a woman to engage with a programme within the prison.
- Offer full outreach health screening from NHS Grampian from the Keepwell Service, ensuring that all women have an opportunity to have their health needs addressed, even if they are not registered with a GP
- Be able to offer Active Aberdeenshire sport and leisure passes to women who wish to improve their physical health and community integration, but do not have the confidence to access these services themselves.
- Link in with Employability Aberdeenshire where crèche facilities may be needed in order for a woman to access courses or further education

3) The Way Forward:

Aberdeenshire's Criminal Justice Women's Service will be operational from the 1 April 2015, after a year of development. As detailed, the service is based on practitioners adopting a gender responsive and trauma informed approach to working with women, linking in with partner agencies and services to provide a holistic and 'wrap around' service. The embedding of the Practice Guidance will be regularly discussed and monitored in supervision by Team Managers, with the effectiveness of the service being evaluated by specific self-evaluation forms which will be completed by service users at the start and the end of their Orders.

In addition to the women's service that is in place, there are a number of factors which will continue to develop and evolve as the service does. The Team Manager for North Aberdeenshire Criminal Justice will be responsible for progressing these factors, ensuring that the service remains dynamic and responsive. It is planned that Aberdeenshire Women's Service will:

- Be able to offer groupwork and drop in support to women in the Peterhead and Fraserburgh area, through the development of a non Statutory social work resource, shared with other services. It is envisioned that criminal justice, community substance misuse and health services will all share this resource, and can deliver joint groupwork sessions, maximising resources and effectiveness through health and social care integration.
- Be able to offer women-only unpaid work workshops, where necessary.
- Await community staff training on SPS programmes for women offenders, in order that programmes started or completed in prison can be followed up and supported in the community

As already stated, sustainability was a key focus in the development of the women's service. However, although no additional funding is required in order for the service to embed into practice and offer a more effective way of working with female offenders, we have clearly identified where additional funding could significantly compliment the service, and address gaps in service provision. As such, Aberdeenshire have submitted a proposal to the Scottish Government (9 March) for funding for 1.5 WTE Community Psychiatric Nurses, to be attached to the women's service. We await feedback on the success/stage of this proposal, but would welcome the increased health based provision within the criminal justice service.

Full details of Aberdeenshire's Women's Service can be found in the Practice Guidance document which is available on request.

