

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL****Community Safety Committee****19 August 2015****Support Services for Women at Risk of Offending****Report by Executive Director (Housing and Community Care)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report updates the committee on the work of the Perth and Kinross One-stop Women's Learning Service (OWLS). It outlines some preliminary indications of success for the project and future developments.

**1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES**

- 1.1 The One-stop Women's Learning Service (OWLS) has been operating since February 2013 in response to a recommendation within the report from the Commission on Women Offenders chaired by Dame Elish Angiolini. The report recommended the establishment of a Community Justice Centre staffed by a criminal justice social worker, nurse and addictions worker to reduce re-offending and bring about behavioural change. This was supported by other national developments and research which highlighted the need for a different approach to be taken when working with vulnerable women offenders. The Angiolini report also recommended that the work delivered by the Community Justice Centre should be complemented by intensive monitoring of women offenders to support their compliance with court orders. Reports outlining the work of OWLS have previously been submitted to the Community Safety Committee on 7th November 2012 (12/500) and 5th November 2014 (14/471).
- 1.2 OWLS was set up in consultation with NHS Tayside, Drug and Alcohol, Housing and Criminal Justice Services who formed the core group for service design and development. The service was planned around women convicted of offences and although the aim was to integrate women into their local communities, it was the women themselves who expressed the preference for a centralised service. This is because they wanted anonymity and not to feel stigmatised because of their offending.
- 1.3 The OWLS Service was initially focused on women subject to a Community Payback Order (CPO), those who had served a short term prison sentence, and those subject to a Supervision Licence after release from custody. In part this was aimed at addressing the nationally recognised concern of the 'revolving door' of those subject to short term prison sentences and their propensity to re-offend and return to custody.

## **2. PROJECT DETAILS**

- 2.1 OWLS initially operated every Thursday and specific rooms at Drumhar Health Centre were utilised both for appointments and as a drop-in facility. The service then expanded to three days across three sites which included utilising the offices at Tayside Council on Alcohol (TCA), Mindspace Limited (previously PAMH) for group work and latterly St Matthew's Church Hall. All work is now carried out at a new centre based in West Mill Street, Perth; a dedicated space for women only which is scheduled to be officially opened in September/October 2015.
- 2.2 The involvement of other agencies includes the following:
- Criminal Justice Social Worker (services the CPO/Licence, group work delivery and individual programmes of work, e.g. anger management; managing violence and aggression, drop-in provision, scheduling of events and classes)
  - Criminal Justice Assistants (completion of Rickter assessments, one-to-one support for women, mentoring if required and practical interventions including group work delivery along with staffing drop-service.)
  - Drug and Alcohol Team Social Worker (substance misuse interventions, Blood Borne Viruses and Naloxone awareness as well as some participation in group work delivery)
  - Housing Options Support Worker (including benefit maximisation)
  - General Nurse (holistic health check including sexual health, staffing physical activities, participation in group-work delivery)
  - Community Psychiatric Nurse (assess to mental health allowing access to community mental health services)
  - Sexual Health Nurse
  - Podiatrist
  - Dentist
  - Optician (when required)
  - Tayside Council on Alcohol (mentoring service)
  - Churches Action for the Homeless (Facing Change Befriending Project)
  - Barnardos (Change Is a Must) who provide group work delivery on parenting skills and positive relationships
  - Soroptomists (group work delivery and volunteering)
  - Police Scotland
- 2.3 100 women have participated in OWLS since its inception. There are currently 54 women attending OWLS with ages ranging from 19 to 69 years. The women have committed offences including misuse of drugs, dishonesty, assault and offences against children, i.e. neglect and physical abuse. The work at OWLS involves both individual appointments with services and group work. All the women who have been eligible to attend OWLS have chosen to do so.

- 2.4 The group work activities continue to cover a wide range of topics including advice and support to stop substance misuse; enhancing and improving women's mental wellbeing; safe guarding and promoting their physical and sexual health; learning to improve their interpersonal and family relationships as well as their everyday life skills for example, cooking and budgeting. Principally all group work activity is aimed at promoting women's self-confidence, self-esteem and self-worth. The activities have involved a broad range of services that have creatively utilised their skills both personal and professional in adapting their way of working to collectively meet the needs of the women in OWLS. Group-work sessions and activities are all discussed and planned with the women ensuring the issues they consider pertinent to their own personal journey and recovery are covered.
- 2.5 There are opportunities through group work to enhance the women's educational and vocational skills as well as their employability. This includes access to agencies including the third sector as well as further education and employment through work with the Shaw Trust and Perth College. For example the women who attended over the winter months all completed First Aid training as this was highlighted as a need by a number of women who care for their grandchildren.
- 2.6 Feedback is obtained after each group work session which is analysed and used to develop and improve the service. The feedback allows staff to modify and tailor the service ensuring the women's needs are met and they feel empowered to take control of their lives. The group sessions also provide a safe place for women to express themselves and develop new life skills.

### **3. POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- 3.1 It has been important to give women a say in determining some of the group work activities. This has helped promote group cohesion and ownership as well as the participant's self-confidence and communication skills. Women are given the opportunity to make suggestions about any activities or changes they think would be appropriate. The women find these activities helpful in articulating their current thoughts and feelings as well as their future hopes, desires and aspirations. The intention would be for the management of the West Mill Street Centre to be carried out by a management group involving OWLS clients supported by statutory services and the third sector.
- 3.2 Discussions are ongoing to enable the new centre in West Mill Street, Perth to be open 6 days a week and some evenings. It is hoped that in the future the centre would become a "Women's Centre", allowing access to not just OWLS clients but also to women who would benefit from the services available there. The financial sustainability of the centre is also being discussed with the voluntary sector and various avenues are currently being explored.

### **4. OUTCOMES**

- 4.1 OWLS' endeavours to demonstrate the following long term outcomes for those attending the service:

- Reduce reoffending
- Promote ownership of and improve personal health and wellbeing
- Promote ownership of and improve financial and housing issues
- Enhanced employability and education opportunities
- Sustain positive personal and family relationships

These relate directly to the 5 strategic outcomes from the Perth and Kinross Community Plan / Single Outcomes Agreement.

- 4.2 A performance and evaluation framework has been developed to enable the services involved to collectively identify short, medium and long term outcomes. The framework utilises a number of different measurement tools to allow progress to be monitored. These tools include the Rickter multi-sensory and evaluation tool, a readiness to change assessment tool, client feedback questionnaires and group work activity assessment and evaluation tools.
- 4.3 Interim analysis of the readiness to change assessment tool shows that positive progress has been made towards achieving a range of short term and medium term outcomes. The readiness to change assessment tool asks about a client's readiness to change and her support needs. This assessment is undertaken three times during a client's engagement with OWLS. It is first completed when she enters the service, repeated at 6 months and completed again when she exits. Fourteen topics are covered by the assessment and include views on offending, readiness to work on problems and substance misuse.
- 4.4 To date, 33 clients have exited OWLS and completed the final readiness to change assessment. Scores for each topic at first assessment were compared to subsequent scores at exit for each client and were rated as either "Got better", "Stayed the same" or "Got worse." An analysis of short term outcomes has evidenced the following:

Readiness to Change – Exit assessment scores compared with initial assessment scores

	Got Better	Stayed the same	Got worse
Views on offending	14 (42.4%)	18 (54.5%)	1 (3.0%)
Attitude to desistance/ Stopping offending	6 (18.2%)	24 (72.7%)	3 (9.1%)
Readiness to work on problems	16 (48.5%)	15 (45.5%)	2 (6.1%)
Problem-solving skills	13 (39.4%)	18 (54.5%)	2 (6.1%)
Engagement with Services	17 (51.5%)	14 (42.4%)	2 (6.1%)
Accommodation	11 (33.3%)	13 (39.4%)	9 (27.3%)
Finances	9 (27.3%)	20 (60.6%)	4 (12.1%)
Physical health	10 (30.3%)	19 (57.6%)	4 (12.1%)
Emotional/ Mental health	13 (39.4%)	16 (48.5%)	4 (12.1%)
Sexual health	4 (12.1%)	26 (78.8%)	3 (9.1%)

Substance misuse	7 (21.2%)	21 (63.6%)	5 (15.2%)
Family/ Social relationships	9 (27.3%)	22 (66.7%)	2 (6.1%)
Leisure Activities	14 (42.4%)	16 (48.5%)	3 (9.1%)
Work, education and/or training	11 (33.3%)	20 (60.6%)	2 (6.1%)

In order to further investigate the extent of improvement in scores from the initial assessment to the assessment at exit, a subsequent analysis was undertaken. From the original 33 clients who exited OWLS, this analysis looked only at the scores for clients who had given negative responses at initial assessment.

It revealed that there were significant improvements (50% or over saying things had got better) in respect the women who had initially gave negative responses, showing improvements in in relation to;

- Views on offending
- Readiness to work on problems
- Engagement with services
- Physical health
- Emotional/Mental health

4.5 Analysis was also carried out the offending profile of 75 women who had attended the Owls programme.

Total number of crimes reported up to 18 months prior to entering OWLS	<b>295</b>
Average crimes per person prior to OWLS	<b>3.9</b>
Total Number of crimes reported up to 18 Months after entering OWLS	<b>102</b>
	<b>1.4</b>
Decrease in crimes	<b>193 (65%)</b>
Number of clients not been recorded as offending after entering OWLS	<b>47 (63%)</b>

The figures relate to the total number of crimes recoded by Police Scotland against OWLS clients and not convictions. The majority of the crimes recorded could be regarded as “low level” e.g. shoplifting but some were of a more serious nature e.g. serious assault and racial hate crimes. This analysis was carried out, **as far as possible**, looking at the offending profile for 18 months before the client’s engagement with OWLS and the 18 months thereafter.

- 4.6 These preliminary findings are very encouraging with improved benefits not only for the women involved but also for their families and the communities they reside in. There is also scope for further potential improvement as the service matures and develops.
- 4.7 The recent Perth and Kinross reported overall reconviction rate of 23.1% compares extremely favourably against the Scottish average of 28.6%. When compared with all 25 Local Authority groups across Scotland, Perth and Kinross is the fifth best performing Local Authority.

## 5. POTENTIAL COST BENEFITS

- 5.1 Short prison sentences are not effective at reducing reoffending in women. The statistics show that 70 per cent of women offenders who received a prison sentence of three months or less are reconvicted of an offence within two years, compared with 55 per cent of those placed on a Probation Order and 27 per cent given a Community Service Order. Prison is more expensive than community disposals. The average cost of a three month prison sentence is of a Community Payback Order is around **£2,400** (including an allowance for the cost of requirements attached to the order). The average cost of a three month prison sentence is **£9200** (Home Office figure for 2012-13). There are also costs to victims and local communities of reoffending. Furthermore, the negative consequences of offending on family relationships are amplified when a woman is sentenced to custody. The report of the Commission on Women Offenders stated that in Scotland more children experience a parent's imprisonment than a parent's divorce. More women offenders have dependent children than men and only a small proportion (17 per cent) of children with mothers in prison live with their fathers while their mother is incarcerated. Approximately 30 per cent of children with imprisoned parents will develop physical and mental health problems, and there is a higher risk of these children themselves also ending up in prison. Overall, the estimated economic and social cost of reoffending over a 10-year period is, on average, over £75,000 per female offender.
- 5.2 The 218 Service opened in Glasgow in December 2003 in response to growing concerns about the needs and treatment of women offenders in the criminal justice system. Whilst its operation has differences from that of OWLS its overall ethos and direction are similar. In 2010 an independent examination (commissioned by the Scottish Government) of the 218 Service found that a **conservative** estimate of the cost benefit established that for every **£1** invested in the service there was a **potential saving of £2.50** per year in savings across health care, criminal justice, social care, the economy and to wider society. Further savings are likely if longer term impacts such as the impact on women offenders' children are taken into consideration.
- 5.3 Other than additional funding to set up OWLS it receives no additional funding and is delivered through the core community justice budget.

## **6. SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS FOR FEMALE OFFENDERS**

- 6.1 The Scottish Government has recently announced that it is to adopt a new approach to dealing with female offenders with a move towards custody in the community, backed by targeted support to address underlying issues and action to reduce the numbers of women receiving custodial sentences.
- 6.2 A new small national prison with 80 places will be created, based on the current site at Cornton Vale, which will house the most serious offenders who still present a risk to others, as well as themselves, alongside five smaller community-based custodial units each accommodating up to 20 women across the country. The proposals intend to deliver 180 high quality gender specific places for women, in addition to the 50 Scotland already has at the recently opened HMP Grampian.
- 6.3 The Scottish Government intend to renew action to reduce the number of women being sent to prison through enhanced support for, and promotion of, community based alternatives. Details of what is intended will be announced shortly. The new national facility and community units will be in place by 2020, with other changes taking place gradually thereafter.
- 6.4 It is intended that the smaller community-based custodial units will provide accommodation as women serve out their sentence, with access to intensive support to help overcome issues such as alcohol, drugs, mental health and domestic abuse trauma which evidence shows can often be a driver of offending behaviour. The units will be located in areas close to the communities of female offenders so that family contact can be maintained.
- 6.5 It is also intended that there will also be more use of community-based alternatives to short-term prison sentences, including restricting liberty through the increased use of electronic monitoring, combined with support in the community, and more funding will be made available for community-based services which provide robust and effective alternatives to custody. The proposals are to be backed by capital investment of up to £82 million, with additional annual resource costs made available to ensure women both in custody and in the community are able to access key services.

## **7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Committees:
- (i) Note the contents of the report;
  - (ii) Instruct the Executive Director to bring a further progress report to Committee in 12 months' time.

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**Approved**

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John Walker	Executive Director (Housing and Community Care)	10 August 2015

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## 1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

<b>Strategic Implications</b>	<b>Yes / None</b>
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	<b>yes</b>
Corporate Plan	<b>yes</b>
<b>Resource Implications</b>	
Financial	<b>no</b>
Workforce	<b>no</b>
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	
<b>Assessments</b>	
Equality Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	
Legal and Governance	
Risk	
<b>Consultation</b>	
Internal	
External	
<b>Communication</b>	
Communications Plan	

### 1. Strategic Implications

#### Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 This report supports the following outcomes of the Community Plan / Single Outcomes Agreement in relation to the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations

#### Corporate Plan

- 1.2 This report supports the following outcomes of the Community Plan / Single Outcomes Agreement in relation to the following priorities:

- (i) Giving every child the best start in life;
- (ii) Developing educated, responsible and informed citizens;
- (iii) Promoting a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable economy;
- (iv) Supporting people to lead independent, healthy and active lives; and
- (v) Creating a safe and sustainable place for future generations.

## **2. Resource Implications**

### Financial

- 2.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### Workforce

- 2.2 There are no workforce issues arising from this report.

### Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no asset management issues arising from this report.

## **3. Assessments**

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties. This section should reflect that the proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:

(i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

### Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matters presented in this report. This is because the Committee are requested to note the contents of the report only and the Committee are not being requested to approve, adopt or agree to an action or to set the framework for future decisions.

### Sustainability

- 3.3 There are no issues in respect of sustainability.

### Legal and Governance

- 3.4 This report contains no issues which would have a legal or governance impact on the Council.
- 3.6 There are no issues of risk arising from the proposals in this report.

#### **4. Consultation**

##### Internal

- 4.1 No internal consultation was carried out.

##### External

- 4.2 NHS Tayside were consulted in the preparation of this report.

#### **5. Communication**

- 5.1 Not relevant to this report.

#### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers were relied upon during the preparation of this report.

The Commission on Women Offenders report (chaired by Dame Elish Angiolini)

Evaluation of the 218 Service: Examining Implementation and Outcomes - Helen Easton and Roger Matthews, London South Bank University / Scottish Government Social Research 2010

#### **7. APPENDICES**

No appendices are attached to this report

